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SUNDAYS AFTER

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EPIPHANY: FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH SUNDAYS
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THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT : FOURTH SUN-
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THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER
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SERMONS AND OUTLINES FOR PASSIONTIDE
AND HOLY WEEK
THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS

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**SERMONS, OUTLINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS**

Third Sunday in Lent

Scriptures Proper to the Day

EPISTLE		EPHES. V. 1-14.
GOSPEL		S. LUKE XI. 14-23.
FIRST MORNING LESSON		GEN. XXXVII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON		GEN. XXXIX. OR XI.
SECOND LESSONS		ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Spiritual Gifts.

Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. I COR. xii. 1.



PIRITUAL gifts—that is, the precious, extraordinary, miraculous gifts, as they are now regarded by most people, with which the Church of that day was familiar. Most people feel it to be a very interesting question whether these gifts are extinct, when they became extinct, and whether there is any probability of their revival. When the Apostle says he does not wish Christians to be ignorant concerning them, he of course means that they knew nothing of them, for he goes on to speak of them in the chapter which has just been read as usual phenomena in their assemblies, the speaking of tongues, the interpretation, the prophesying, so that what he means is that they did not thoroughly understand them, did not see the principle and the bearing of them, not that they were unacquainted with them.

That might possibly be the case with some of us. And as his epistles were written for all time, he most likely considered that it would be always good for the Church to know something about them. Are the gifts themselves extinct? or is it only some phase of their manifestation which has gone by, if it has gone by?

It would be difficult to think that they are thus gone, when the first three out of the nine mentioned in verses 7 to 9 are what they are, wisdom, knowledge, and faith. These cannot have been intended to be temporary. It would be difficult to think so. The Apostle

COMPLETE SERMON

does not speak of what was going on as a new creation, a new endowment, an addition to humanity. He calls it a manifestation of the Spirit, a manifestation, a making open, a bringing out, a putting in evidence of the presence of the divine Spirit which was in all Christians.

I. How simple the first thing is which he mentions as a gift of the Spirit. He says, 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.' The most elementary expression of my conviction that there is something in Jesus Christ which entitles Him to my homage, as standing alone among men, that, he says, is the stirring of the Holy Ghost within me. I cannot say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. The confession of my lips that there is in Him that which ought to give Him the mastery of men's souls, my acknowledgment that He has glory among the sons of men, even this first intention, long before we learn the consequences which flow from the fact, even this is a gift of the Holy Ghost.

Then as we consider the nine forms of gifts which he here enumerates we cannot fail to observe that though none of them are utterly unknown things to us, brought from some other unknown sphere, they are not magical, they are not talismans and amulets and things the possession of which makes men not to be men. But they are all of them intensifications, under the strong influences and emotions of the Spirit, of gifts which lie woven in the nature of every one of us. They are these: wisdom, insight, faith, healing, the power of prophecy, discernment of spirits, kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. I need not, I am sure, pause on the well-known fact (to be found in any commentary), that prophecy does not here mean prediction. It means what we call preaching, declaring the principles of Christian society, of duty and religion; the truths of God's character and dealings. And I need not dwell on the fact that 'tongues' do not mean foreign tongues but very exalted, rapt, ecstatic utterances, and the printing of our Bible shows that the word 'unknown' tongues is simply an insertion of our translators.

Well now, we recognise that most of these powers or gifts here named are still existing, in their measure at any rate, among great men and good men. Faith, insight, discernment of spirits, we have their presence still. We also see that at Corinth men could and did misuse their gifts, even though they were divinely given. They had them at their command, they could and did misuse their gifts in irregular and improper ways, just as men do the gifts of genius, not to edification but to confusion, all those powers in the course of the twelfth chapter. They could and did use their powers to so glorify and exalt and increase their own impressiveness, and even, it seems, to fill their own pride. The employment of those lofty powers

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was capable of regulation and self-control and must be controlled if God was to be glorified in His own gifts.

II. Now, even if the gift of healing, and what are specially called powers, seems to us at first sight to belong to another class outside human nature, we shall possibly not think so if we consider the strange glimpses that we have of moral and spiritual forces, the peculiar indication of latent powers in our nature which are not yet brought into line with natural law as we know it, the apparently incredible phenomena which still scientific men do not as a rule deny, the almost familiar things which are called the influence of mind over matter. Evidence abounds for the reality of unusual acts occurring when the spirit of men and of whole classes of men are brought into strong emotion under the dominion of exciting and exalting ideas. When in modern times we are confronted with startling phenomena among ecstatic sects or among visionary ascetics, we do not deny the possibility of the facts. We may not always be sure of the evidence, but if the evidence is good we recognise their probability. We require for a religious revelation that the sight and the vision should justify itself by its fruits; that it should work some great deliverance, that it should really promote the unity of men, not merely add sect to sect or order to orders. We accept the wonders only for what they may be worth. We require much more to prove to us that there is really an unearthly, transforming, unifying presence of divinity. We who in heart and soul believe that the apostolic age was a real bond of newly revealed contact with God's love and His regenerating, inspiring personality are sure that this is that bond of which we see traces on smaller and lower occasions, and we can recognise a practical working reason why when the old world was at a crisis of being converted into a new world, S. Paul distinctly says the things that happened were for a sign, not to them that believed, but to them that believed not.

The strongest argument for Christianity, it has been well said, and often repeated, is Christendom. With all the sins and sorrows of its history, and perhaps all the more because of it, it is Christendom itself which establishes and proves and extends Christianity. But this greatest argument was wanting in the apostolic age. There was no Christendom. There were neither the Christians nor the organisation to convince and to affect upon a great scale. And there being no Christendom with its far-reaching and penetrating system, no Christendom to be its own unresting missionary, the Spirit of Christ breathed upon the chords of our sympathetic nature and seemed the strange music out of the Æolian harp of humanity which strangers perforce stood still to listen to, until they fell upon their faces and confessed that God moves in it of a truth.

COMPLETE SERMON

III. What are called the gifts, then, the spiritual gifts, represent to us not additions but intensifications. There is among them no new thing that is alien to or unknown to our nature. There is the bringing out into relief and brilliance the forces that lie low and dark, but really in man. These are intensified to white heat by contact with Christians. But, now, contact with Christ has to prove itself, not by fiercely arresting attention among those that have never heard His name, but by wisdom, strength, truth, consistency, by lives led in the faith of Him among those that have heard His name all their lives. To them altered character would be a much better proof that we are in touch with Christ than the most striking spectacle of wonders. There are planets so near the sun that they are almost invisible in his light and almost molten with his heat; but the spectrum tells us that they are of the same material as our great cloud-laden earth. And earth is the region where only we can see life as carried on under the best conditions. If we realise that our souls and natures possess the solid powers and substantial realities and faculties of life in Christ, we shall not feel ourselves at a disadvantage in spreading Christianity compared even with those in whom our earthly elements were quickened into dazzling flame. We too have among us wisdom and knowledge and faith by the same Spirit. Gifts of healing of the very highest belong to those who can comfort and soothe and animate, who can so reduce the fever of passion that the very flaming air grows more temperate, and so enkindle the warmth of courage that we grow strong. We read of miracles, but we have Christ's word for it that greater things than these shall we do because He has gone to the Father. And these are greater things.

As this one uttered ecstatic language and another interpreted it, so now the deep thinkers of modern time, of our own day, are seldom able to express themselves in the language of the people. And yet by the help of interpreters, friends, and followers, and readers, and teachers, the deepest thoughts of one time became the very axioms and proverbs of the next. The true popularising of great thoughts is one of the greatest services that ephemeral literature renders. The discernment of spirits is not a gift for the first century only. We owe to no one half the debt which we owe to those who see and explain the tendencies of great movements, who try the spirits which lead this man and party this way and another that way, who mark the excellencies of religious schools of thought and who by their discernment impose checks upon or pour new life into the spirit of their age.

Does then S. Paul say that some manifestation or other was given to every man to profit withal, that is, to use profitably for the Church? Does he say that of these gifts? How much more may we say who have not the flame but the fire, not the anticipation but

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the substance, not the startlingness but the solid reality of the divine spirit and force which is given to every man here to use profitably for the good of all,—to use profitably for the good of all, for in no other way can they be used as they are meant. S. Paul supplies the famous illustration, which is much more than an illustration, but we will come to that presently. The discontented foot upon the ground, says he, cannot say to the jewelled hand, I shall go on to seek my own fortune and leave you to your fate. It cannot be said. The delicate hand cannot bid the tramping foot begone because it does not want it. The creature which was all one perfect organ, nothing but eye or ear, would be an unspeakably helpless monster. Hand and eye, foot and ear are for action, for direction, for support, movement, warning, unbrokenly bound up in each other's interests, and they have no separate advantage or even existence. This is S. Paul's bold picturesque exposition of what sometimes appears to us as a late discovery, the solidarity of humanity. No class, no individual, can possibly have detached or isolated interests. The contemptuousness or the selfishness of any class, the hardness, the bitterness, the supposed necessary antagonism, are all wrong. Conciliation, mutual approach, the desire to understand each other's position, readiness to believe in each other, wish to be just, all fairness, all uprightness, make the only temper with which the solidarity of humanity is any more than a cant expression. But Christianity has ages ago made them the forefront of her teaching and has embodied them in her holy lives. This is the point of both her sacraments. They are to teach, they are to work out in us our oneness. We were all baptized, says the Apostle, into one body. We were all made to drink, in the Eucharistic cup, of one spirit. However high and sacred the other doctrines are, which are conveyed by those holy sacraments, this is the true point of view, that classes and races are one, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, socialist, aristocrat, employer, employé, the Church is to make one not in word but in deed.

IV. As we saw, this lesson for the body is more than an illustration. Members and membership are not a metaphor borrowed from the body and forcibly applied to society as if to a wholly different kind of thing. All this creation is a parable itself of things spiritual: its life and death, its body, its organisation, they are the expression in a material world of the facts of the eternal world. The body and membership of the body set forth to us by that divine intention how necessary we are each to the other, how we sin against our own lives and destroy our own right to be wherever we are careless and inconsiderate, selfish and exclusive, intolerant and hard. We are verily guilty concerning our brother if we ever see the anguish of his soul and will not hear.

COMPLETE SERMON

Well then, how great is the duty that rests on us to know what our own gifts are! We are certain that we have these gifts, but what are they? and then, how are we to use them according to God's will for the good of His children? Great indeed are the needs of men. The ignorance and the wilful vice and the vice that is almost enforced by evil social arrangements, the ruin of happiness, the defilement, the destruction of these beautiful strong bodies, the darkening out of the light of God's countenance as innocence gives way and as men get absorbed in the endeavour to meet the world at the cost of their own lives, here and hereafter, the exclusion of the knowledge of Christ which has had and has now infinite power to order all things rightly,—these are some of the evils we have to meet. On the other hand, how great are the resources of God's gifts in us if we would use them for the remedy of such fearful needs! Wisdom is not rare among men if men would speak out and not look on in distant and hopeless silence. Faith is not rare, but it is timid. It is too commonly locked up in the bosom, not confessed in the railway carriage or the office, but kept for quiet hours and sacred times and places. And yet that is not its mission. Its mission is to overcome the world.

And this discernment and the gift of utterance and the wonderful powers of gentle influence which so many have, and the healing restorative power which manly and womanly characters possess, alas, to what narrow circles are these beautiful endowments often restricted; although we see that when they have overcome their shrinking and their shyness, and speak boldly in the name of Jesus, they are never once found to fail.

And there are indeed many who recognise their membership of the body by sympathy with suffering. At no time perhaps has real suffering drawn out human sympathy so widely and so personally. But membership of Christ's body cannot regard sufferers only. It must sympathise with sinners. He comes Himself to call sinners, to seek and to save that which was lost. And as Christ, so must Christians work. But there are so many who say that rescue is useless, if it were even possible, who say that prevention is hopeless when passion is so strong, who quietly contemplate this awful waste as if it were a necessary condition of human life, who say that selfishness is an inevitable product of beneficial competition. But these are not Christian believers. Not only sufferers but sinners are intrusted to the tender mercy, not of clergy only, or of sisterhoods, but of all. Those unhappy people who are finding an estrangement from their former life and friends, who are aware that disgrace, resourcelessness are suddenly upon them; they who sin secretly and just begin to perceive that every one is aware of it; those who find that some evil thing

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has taken possession of them though they loathe it; they who find that appetite or covetousness or hatred or wilfulness indulged in thought has led them to some sudden act which is a horror to them and may lead them they know not where,—all these need the sympathy and kindness of the just even more than sufferers do. It was because the just would not consent to contact with them that Christ said He had no mission to them, and their place in the Kingdom of Heaven was a very doubtful one.

We lament the divisions of our Church, of religious bodies from one another, of Christendom. Oh, what might not happen if we were first of all of one mind in striving against sin in ourselves, in healing sin in others, if our various and innumerable gifts were consecrated to winning men from sin? From sin they must be won before any other matters in dispute, any of the delightful offices of religion can be even discussed which have any vital interest for the vast proportion of our people. The first original call of the Kingdom of God was that men should everywhere repent and believe the gospel. Conversion from sin to purity in life, to purity in truth, that was the first necessity. And then the call was spread not by clergy and preachers only but by all. It was a natural working of all the members of Christ to build up the body, by that, says S. Paul, which every joint supplied. That such unity may one day be given to Christendom is the pathetic hope of our best and purest spirits. It is the Eucharistic prayer of our own Church. But our Church, as she gazes kneeling on the fair vision of purity, sees, like S. John in the Apocalypse, that it is a city which has very deep foundations. It is no specious Roman unity. It is not a bond that has been broken once for all, a fact founded on fiction. The unity she prays for far surpasses that external unity in length and breadth and depth and height. But we doubt not that the foundations are really being laid in patience and in growing knowledge, even as we pray, in the words of our Church, that all they who do confess God's holy name may agree in the truth of His holy word and live in unity and godly love.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Command to follow God.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. EPHESIANS V. 1-9.



THE season of Lent is, on the one hand, dedicated to the contemplation of our Lord's sufferings, so, on the other hand, in close connection with this, it is intended for the application of this contemplation to our own condition—to a moral inspection and discipline, to which during this season we should subject ourselves with renewed earnestness and strictness.

We will therefore, following the direction of our text, consider together in God's presence the command to follow God, and attempt to make clear to ourselves, 1st, Its necessity and meaning; and, 2d, Its application to the circumstances of this earthly life.

I. In general let us remind ourselves, in the first place, of something in the expression 'following God,' which we make use of in conformity with our text. The word 'followers' in the text does not completely answer the original expression of the Apostle, who really means 'imitators,' so that it would be more exactly translated, 'Be ye therefore imitators of God.'

Seeing and knowing God is not yet sufficient, in order to imitate Him; the right-minded man requires a life similar to the divine life, otherwise only a dead and outward work takes place. The ungodly and earthly mind can never imitate the divine and heavenly mind, even with the best wishes and intentions. In a word, we come back to that which the Apostle tells us in our Epistle, 'as dear children'; to be really the children of God, in the widest extent of the word, is assumed as a necessary condition for following God.

And the natural man has nothing of all these things, therefore he is certainly incapable of following God. But the command does not go forth to him, but to the Christian, and in Christ all these requirements are fulfilled. In Christ the invisible God has become revealed; thus the Saviour could say: 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father' (S. John vi. 46); or, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (S. John xiv. 9). In

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Christ we look into God's heart (S. John iii. 16). In Christ God comes to every one who believes on the name of the only-begotten Son of God,—so near that he can hear in every single and particular case, through His Spirit and mouth, if he only wills it, how the Son of Man would have acted in his place. Finally, in Christ we are through faith born again to a new life in God,—to be the children of God.

II. The question still remains to us: Has the command to follow God, which we have just described, its proper application to the circumstances of this earthly life? Is it not perhaps dangerous to direct man's glance so high, while he has so many important duties lying directly before his eyes? Will it not tempt him to overlook these duties, to esteem them lightly, to neglect them? Would it not be safer to point him to these only? This apprehension is in itself quite deserving of respect, and well-grounded, but not in this particular case. We can assert with justice that the command to follow God maintains a peculiar importance on account of its wide application.

On the one hand, it appears to divert us from the active life, while it powerfully impels us into the hidden life in God and Christ, in a right and constant prayerful communion with God, without which such a special seeing and hearing is impossible. But, on the other hand, the following of God in no way diverts us from the ordinary active life, in which it can suitably manifest itself; but, on the contrary, it draws us right into this, because it makes our walk a walking in love, and especially that love which peculiarly finds its place in the most ordinary relations of active life, and necessarily in that sacrificing, enduring, forgiving love. It makes that command the central point of following God, and therefore makes that which in our temporal life oppresses us most heavily one of the most divine blessings. Holiness is attained by nothing less than a following or imitation of God. The command of the following of God gradually erases this darkest shady side of the earthly walk of the Christian who submits himself to it, and in its place erects gloriously the bright side of his walk, in accordance with which view it is a walking in light, as God is light and dwells in light, and a walking in the Spirit in contrast to walking after the flesh. It gives to the Christian's walk that strange and remarkable light and splendour, of which natural virtue must admit that it surpasses its powers,—this divine simplicity, clearness, purity, trustworthiness, kindliness, fervour, and glory. It rouses and supports in him the three chief virtues, which the eye directed to the following of God recognises as the three hues in which the rays of divine light are refracted, in which God was manifested in Christ, in which He walks, and ever works.

R. ROTHE.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Walking in the Light.

Walk in love. EPHESIANS v. 2.

Walk as children of light. EPHESIANS v. 8.

THERE is no commoner image used in Holy Scripture of a Christian life than that of a journey. Enoch 'walked with God'; David says, 'I have walked innocently'; Zacharias and Elizabeth 'walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless'; S. Paul says, 'We walk by faith.' In fact, life is always looked at as a journey; all through the Bible it is the same. I think John Bunyan knew his Bible well; so it was that he wrote his wonderful allegory. In the Bible we have many counsels for our journey, and here, in the epistle for to-day, we have two of them, and it is a happy union of these two counsels that we meet with, for neither of them is complete alone. Love without light, though perchance the better of the two, is often silly, ignorant; ay, often brings religion into contempt. Well may we pray for those we love, as the Apostle did for the Philippians, that their love 'may abound more and more in knowledge and in all wisdom.' Light without love, on the other side, is a dreadful thing; it is Satanic, for the devils have light but no love. There is no character more fearful than that of one seeing clearly, but with the heart untouched. But when the two are linked together, when there is love and light, when they bear a due proportion and relation to one another, then the life is blessed and happy. What is this but to say that God claims the whole being, that as He has made the inner constitution of man to be of two great parts, the moral and the intellectual—or, as we popularly put it, the heart and the mind—so God claims neither without the other, but both equally? And to say, as some do say, that it matters not what a man believes so long as he loves God, and tries to do his duty, is straight against God's word, which lays upon us all a responsibility not alone for our emotions, not alone for our actions, but also for the formation of our beliefs. But now I want that we should consider these two great elements separately—the two counsels which S. Paul gives us in our epistle for our walk through life.

I. And, first of all, 'Walk in love.' Here we have a command founded upon a reason: 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved you.' Yes, of all forces love is the most powerful as a force to act upon others. Pure disinterested love is all but irresistible—all but, not quite; for if it were quite irresistible, then the world had been converted long ago. It takes a hard heart to resist the power of love. We all know the old fable of the wind and the sun. You may

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threaten, you may argue, you may drive, and all will be in vain; try love, and you will very likely succeed. S. Paul's argument is one, I think, that is well worth weighing. He tells us that 'scarcely for a righteous man would one die; yet for a righteous man some would even dare to die. But God commended His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Show me any picture of love that you please. Tell me of a mother rushing into the flames of a burning house at the risk of her own life to try and save her little one. Tell me of the Russian slave that flung himself out of the sledge when pursued by a pack of wolves, that he might save his master and his master's family. These, at anyrate, were, if heroic enough, yet actions wrought under the influence of a momentary excitement gathered up into one supreme act of self-sacrifice. Tell me, then, rather of some life given in long, unseen, unrecognised self-sacrifice for the love of another. Tell me of some one giving up home, and love, and friends, and honour, and wealth that he might guard and protect, let us say, some one he loved from a possible danger. Tell me of these things, and I will tell you of a better love and a more self-sacrificing love still. For this is God's love. Do you doubt it? Well, you might if God had not proved it; but when God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for it; when each one can say of that everlasting Son, 'He loved me and gave Himself for me'; when we read: 'For Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling savour'—how shall we longer doubt? The death of Christ is the most worthy act conceivable in God's eye. It is the crowning act of love and self-sacrifice. As a modern writer says: 'The profoundest truth in all religion is this, that the death of Christ is the life of God.' He means that the death of Christ is the one deepest expression of the life of God who is love. Then here is the motive, here is the magnet which is to draw. This stupendous act of love is set before us evermore. Is not this the very motive and intention of that glorious reredos, *Sic Deus dilexit mundum*, 'So God loved the world'? and men look up and criticise and perchance admire, but they hear no voice whispering to their souls, 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.' Christ's splendid act of self-sacrifice glows like a furnace, but our icy hearts melt not. I think S. Augustine was right when he said that the most wonderful thing he knew was that God could love man so much, and man love God so little. Alas! to plenty of educated people, to plenty of church-goers, to plenty of readers of the Bible, even the story of the Cross is no more real than it was to that poor labourer, who, when he heard it read, said he hoped such dreadful things were not true.

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And then there comes the command, 'Walk in love'—I think a command hardly needed by those who first know God's love to them and yet a command that often fills me with shame. Oh! we can love so many people but God. Do I love God? What! with all my heart, or with a tithe of my heart? God forgive me! It seems to me that there is no command in all the Bible which is so universally broken as 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' But the text rather applies to love to man. Well, let us see. This unkindly attack about your neighbour, is that what is meant by walking in love? This bitter, uncharitable thought, that will come up again and again, that you love to dwell upon and to aggravate by imagined scenes of bitterness, is this to walk in love? This quarrel and enmity beginning with such a trifle, such a contemptible trifle, but which will not be appeased; is this to walk in love? This violence of party spirit which stays its hand at nothing, which cares for no misrepresentation, which halts not at any breach of truthfulness, so that it may wreak its vengeance upon an enemy,—is this to walk in love? This selfishness which ever seeks her own, which has so little thought for the feelings or the welfare of those around, which loves so much self-indulgence and self-pleasing,—is this to walk in love? This pride which so easily takes offence, which claims its rights, which will not yield to another; is this to walk in love? This class feeling which is so bitter and often so ignorant, which is evermore fostering ill-will and envy and unkindliness, ay, and which some are so constantly labouring to foster,—is this to walk in love? This wrong and injustice, again, which some will bear all too patiently so long as their own interests are not touched or endangered, is this to walk in love? Oh! it sometimes looks as if God had never loved the world; as if Jesus had never died for the world; as if there were no such thing as love at all!

II. But we come to the other command: 'Walk as children of light.' Now, light, of course, is put for knowledge, as darkness is put for ignorance. Well, the light shows us what otherwise could not be seen; it reveals to us what otherwise were unknown. That which death makes manifest is light; so that one walking in the light knows, sees, understands what otherwise he would not, and therefore he walks securely, just as one with his eyes opened will walk along the street avoiding the obstacles, escaping the dangers, directing his course aright. Now, the one who walks as a child of light sees the things that it is needful for him to behold, if he too would avoid the perils, would escape the evils of his journey, and direct his way aright towards the everlasting home. He sees, he knows self, he understands what he is in the sight of God; he sees what that soul of his, all sin-stained, all miserably defiled with the pollutions of

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sin must look like in the eyes of an all-pure God. And he sees God. I do not mean that he can grasp and comprehend the Infinite—God forbid! but he sees, he knows what God is, he knows God's power and wisdom and holiness and justice. And the more he knows of self the more he shrinks from the purity and holiness of God. Ay, but he knows something better than both, for he knows how God loves. He knows how the Son of God has come and lived and died; therefore, though he knows himself, and though he knows God, yet he lifts up his head with new courage, for he knows God's love, and he trusts the mercy of the Redeemer. When he sets his soul in the light of God, and lets the blazing fire of God's purity shine upon it, no wonder he trembles; but when he looks up and sees the loving smile of Him who loved him and gave Himself for him, he is filled with new hope and new joy and new courage. Yes, this is true; but when one walks as a child of light, how he hates the deeds of darkness; how he flees from all of which he would be ashamed, which he would wish to hide in the dark! Stay—that hidden deed of dishonesty, that little secret, a long-continued act of unworthy and unfair trading by which the profit was made, perchance—is that to walk as a child of light? That secret thought of impurity which was cherished, which was not driven out, which took up its abode in the secret corner of your heart, which was sometimes forgotten or ignored, but was ready to start up again into new life and activity, was that to walk as a child of light? That whispered story by which you, one day, when you thought none were hearing, poured into another's ear some tale of uncharitableness, by which, perhaps, you may even have brought a blush upon the cheek of one more innocent than yourself; oh, was that to walk as a child of light? Nay, the child of light will have nothing to do with the deeds of darkness.

But then again, remember that the light shines. It falls on others. The child of light not only walks wisely and safely, but he shines; he is a reflected light: not like the sun, which shines with its own inherent, intrinsic light, but like the planets, which shine with borrowed light. 'So we all, with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God.' Yes; a Christian's influence is like some bright lamp which sheds its warm and blessed glow all around. 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.' Yes; but where are you to get your light from? Human nature, I think, has not much light about it. Nay, the light comes from the Fountain of Light, the Sun. He that said: 'Ye are the light of the world,' first said: 'I am the Light of the world.' It is Christ shining on them, and in them, and through them, which

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makes Christian people to walk as children of light. Oh, Dayspring, Splendour of the Eternal Glory, Sun of Righteousness, come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; ay, come and be our Light too. Lighten us, Thy poor followers, that as we go on our way we may walk as children of Light, as a company of lamp-bearers lighting up the way for those who are still in darkness, shining with our own feeble light till we stand at last in the blaze of the presence chamber:

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light;
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight. —Amen.

BISHOP WALSHAM HOW.

From among the Dead.

Wherefore He saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. EPHESIANS V. 14.

WHETHER the words of the text are quoted, in free phrase, from the 1st verse of the 60th chapter of the Prophet Isaiah, or whether they are the words, as some have imagined, of an early Christian hymn; or whether they are merely S. Paul's own expression of the general purport of the Gospel call: is a question of little significance, in comparison with the grave and momentous import of the appeal itself.

It is a Lenten subject. It goes straight to the conscience. It has (1) the description of a person—a graphic picture, which he who runs may read. It has (2) a call to that person—to make a change in his state. It has (3) a promise—vocal to the wise.

I. Two figures are used to describe the person. Sleep—and the companionship of the dead. They are figures for thought rather than for expansion. I cannot make either of them clearer than it is. I can but pray you to carry each into the soul's province. Imagine that in the soul which you call sleep in the body—that torpor, that inaction, that unconsciousness, or that semi-consciousness which we call dreaming. Realise these parallelisms. An inactive, a torpid soul—an unconscious or semi-conscious soul. What is this? We ask what is the soul's activity—what is the soul's vitality of perception and action? The soul, born of God, returning to God, has a meaning, and a business, and a goal, real enough and to spare, in the eyes of all but materialists and atheists. The soul has to see God, and converse with God, and work for God, and give account to God, every day that it is encased in this body. If the soul cannot,

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will not, do any of these things; if it languidly lets alone its separate, its presiding functions, leaving the mind in charge, and never either insisting, or reproving, or administering, or controlling, or interfering at all in the management of the life's life—what can we say of it? Sleep is the gentlest word we can find for such a condition. Sleep, S. Paul calls it—sleep, and the companionship (at least) of the dead. Among the dead, if not one of them. If that torpor, that inactivity be total—if there be no sign of breath or pulse, if that unconsciousness be absolute, if there be not even a dream or a vision to break or agitate the slumber, then the sleep must be called by a stronger name—he who so sleeps is in the company (at least) of the unawakening, of the dead.

The appeal, I say, is to consciences. Are these souls awake, or asleep—alive, or dead? Ask suddenly, give no time for fencing or parrying. Is your soul living the life of God? Is your soul day by day speaking to God, and hearing God speak, within; looking upward seriously for direction, setting God before it in all things, enjoying His converse, looking forward to His presence, not vaguely, or as of course, but with a reason which it can give, and a hope which it can define? There is no man who knows not this, in a rough general way, no man who cannot say, promptly and positively, 'My soul is tied and bound at this moment with a chain of tyrannous sins, against which it struggles feebly, or struggles not.' 'My soul is eaten up with cares and anxieties, with toils and pleasures, of this life, into which God enters not at all, or enters as an unwelcome visitor, or a condemning judge.' 'My soul is tossed on a sea of doubt and uncertainty concerning all that is called God or that is worshipped, insomuch that prayer is precluded, and the Bible shelved, and the question of questions, eternity itself, and my place in it, postponed into a remote future, which comes not'; or else, 'My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; His word is my meditation all the day, I love Him, and trust His love, He is mine, and I am His.'

Suffer not any illusion, of name or form, of doctrine or Sacrament, to come between you and your conscience in this mighty decision to which the text calls you. S. Paul assumes that we know, all of us, what our state is. He could not otherwise say, 'Awake, thou that sleepest!' It is a simple, primary consciousness, in each one, to which he addresses himself. We love, in our indolence, and in our cowardice, to represent it as a difficult, doubtful, insoluble mystery, what we are, and where, at this moment, in the soul's life, and in the life of God. It is not so. Enter into thy closet, and shut thy door behind thee, and there tell God, plainly, positively, for thou canst, whether thou art awake, or asleep—alive, or among the dead.

II. It is certainly remarkable, that the call to waking and rising is

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addressed so imperatively, so undoubtingly, to the sleeper and to the dead. There is a wonderful lesson here in the science of the soul. Doctrinally, we know, and we may well thank God for it, that we have no power, of ourselves, to do any one thing that is good; least of all, to make this mighty transition from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. If we leave God out of this, we deceive ourselves fatally, and can never see light. Yet practically, and we do not make 'practical' the opposite of 'doctrinal' in thus speaking, practically, the call to resurrection itself must be made to the man—to the dead man. It is one of the mysteries of grace and free will—both true, both vital. 'Awake . . . arise . . . and Christ shall give thee light.' There is a mandate of awakening, as well as a promise. The palsied arm must be made to stretch itself, even though the malady is, that it cannot. In the effort to obey comes the power. 'The man who says, when Christ speaks, 'I cannot—grace alone can enable—I wait for it,' that man will lie still in his sleep till the fire is on the stairs and in his chamber. There is an attitude of expectation, there is an alacrity of listening, there is a girding of the loins for escape, there is even a coming forth in the grave-clothes, as from a four days' interment, towards the Voice which shall say, 'Loose and release him,' without which no clearness of doctrine as to God's part and man's part will avail anything in effecting the great conversion from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. Pray as though you were nothing, act as though you were all.

III. Finally, the promise: 'Christ shall give thee light.'

Christ shall shine upon thee, when thou hast awakened, when thou art risen, with that light which makes manifest; which transforms the darkness irradiated, into the likeness, into the reality, of the light which irradiates.

The sleeper is to waken, just as he is. No self-transformation is asked of him. Only this: Such as thou art, open the sealed eye, and shake off sleep. The dead man is to arise, like the young man at Nain, to 'sit up' on his bier, still in his grave-clothes, still on his way to burial. Christ will do the rest. It is His to give light. It is His to pour upon the heart and upon the life that light which first reproves and then transfigures. Be serious, be inquiring, be in earnest. I know that this too is of grace. Still it is a grace offered to 'who-soever will,' and it is a preventing, a prevenient grace, without which Christ's mightiest miracles cannot be wrought, because of that utter unbelief which is (in plain terms) indifference and inattention. Therefore we say, nay, God Himself here says, S. Paul being the interpreter, 'Awake, arise, from the sleep, from the death, of sin and ungodliness,' alone, separately, from amongst the sleeping, from amongst the dead, and Christ Himself waits to enlighten.

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Refuse not Him that speaketh. The light of the spiritual day is as beautiful as it is transparent. It will show thee God Himself in His love and in His power. It will explain Him, it will justify Him, in His way and in His dealing. It will make crooked things straight before thee, and lead thee by a way that thou knewest not, toward a rest and a home where all is blessedness and assurance for ever. 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Darkness and Light.

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. EPH. v. 8.

IN a season when the Church bids us escape from the claims of society to the solitude of our own hearts, and search there without reference to any outward standard of well-doing if we are making progress, it is not amiss to consider the teaching of our faith as to the double principles in things, each inviting our adhesion, and compare or contrast it with other systems of metaphysic or morals.

I. In the very depths of our heart lies a conviction of the doubleness of things, which is effaced neither by the consolation and spiritual joyousness of the Christian message, nor by the material comfort of modern life, nor by the complacent utterances of science, which tells us that such an obsolete duel of warring principles is since reconciled, or proved to be a complete illusion. But the antithesis of matter and spirit, actual and ideal, the new and old man, higher and lower nature, is too familiar, too firmly settled in the universal mind; it refuses to be dislodged by reason or argument, however vigorously we may use these weapons to drive our prejudice, or induce belief—in vain. So long as Romans vii. remains a faithful picture of the natural man, and his inward doubts and warfare—and can we look forward to a time when this will represent him no longer?—so long will this deep-seated belief influence our faith and our conduct.

Mankind have seized on the simple experience of day and night, of recurrent light and gloom, to represent this duel, or at least alternation, of contraries. In such metaphor they seek to convey the mystery of the world's origin, as well as the irradiation of that smaller world, the soul, with influence of Deity.

II. What then is this kingdom of darkness from which we are called to become children of light? We dismiss the Eastern fable, now accepted, now rejected by Platonism, that evil resides in matter, and is merely a temporary film over the soul's vision. In this view, as I have said, no idea of guilt is admissible; we cannot speak of the

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guilt of the unconscious; we must at once give up sentiments of indignation for mere compassion.

Neither again are we allowed to assert an original opposition of Ahriman or Ormuzd, of two personal independent beings of light and darkness, whose field of eternal conflict is this neutral borderland of the visible world. Nor again may we gnostically suppose that the world is the fabrication of an angel, either actively malignant or only ignorant and of limited power, and that our redemption, the redemption of the elect, the world-process, is a summoning back of a portion of Deity wrongfully detained.

What then are we as Churchmen allowed to say? Let me first state the axiom that Christianity only acknowledges a person, a will, and is only concerned with persons, with wills; all the rest may go. Evil then resides in rebellion of will, which may be eternal.

If true liberty, true happiness consist just in the full submission to God's will, slavery and unhappiness will consist in submission to any finite will; and guilt is to turn away from the Source of being to worship a creature.

III. We are taught to believe that such apostasy of will takes place, before man enters the world, in a purely spiritual world; the kingdom of darkness exists not in the author of creation, not in an independent sovereign of adverse will, not in the vileness of matter, but in the perversion of will from its true life, in language familiar alike to Christian and Pagan Platonist and modern speculator, in the turning of will from its repose in adoration of the one to vagrancy (as Fichte expresses it) in the manifold and transient; to worship of itself, or of that which it deems its own nature.

Man sacrifices his free will to an alien master. The doctrine of original sin needs not to be supported by argument: it is a fact of human history; where with increasing sense of what ought to be done comes increasing weakness to do it.

'The evil that I would not, that I do.' Christianity exists, not as the mediæval Church hoped, to reconquer the world, but to give to the few faithful, 'the elect' (for whose sake the days are shortened), the message of recovery of a forfeited freedom, not a new code of behaviour.

But if an imprisoned free will is thus released, it is because it desires such release; an absolute evil will cannot, because it will not, be saved. Those who wish to get free can find release: homage is not compelled, nor is happiness forced on free beings; and the kingdom of darkness (called in S. John the world and its prince) is of those who will not turn.

'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.'

The mission of Christianity has not changed in the ages; the

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Church need not adapt herself to the knowledge or progress of the human race. When man comes to be without consciousness of shame, unease, and guilt ; to be at natural peace with himself ; to satisfy the discontent with the present, the universal craving after the absent (which, contrary to Socialist promise, is ever parallel, not with the greatest misfortune, for that is a palliative, but with the greatest prosperity of society)—when the seventh chapter of the Romans ceases to describe the inner conflict, then will we acknowledge that the harmony is restored ; that our faith preaches contentment, social progress, belief in power of the natural man, acquiescence in the present comfort of home or nation.

Until that time we shall try to win over persons, one by one, from slavery to the evil principle (evil to them, because it does not give them happiness). We shall refuse to trust great schemes of universal improvement, the lazy method of those who love abstractions, and are tired of individuals ; we shall ever point to the highest flight from the world, which alone partakes the true light in its fulness ; recognising the difference of ideal capable of achievement by each, but not therefore lowering the best to a uniform and merely respectable standard ; and we are confident in our militant attitude, for we have one who says, ‘In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have (not converted nor reformed) but overcome the world.’

F. W. BUSSELL.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Dumb Spirit.

Jesus was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone, the dumb spake. S. LUKE xi. 14.



HERE is a sense, and a very true sense, in which every natural man, every man who lets himself live practically without God, apart from Christ, in the world, has in him a dumb spirit, and can only lose that spirit under the healing touch of Christ.

I. I might speak of that calamity, that curse, which we designate as a bad temper. That sullen silence ; that overcast brow ; that gloomy, morose, most irritating reserve ; that gathering, threatening, overhanging cloud of dull, dark, speechless displeasure, by which a long evening has been

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rendered miserable, and upon which night and sleep have passed without mitigation and without relief; that obstinate nursing and cherishing of an untold grudge, which awakens again in the morning to its last night's sullenness, and seems almost to pride itself upon its tenacity and its perseverance; was not this indeed a sample of possession by a dumb spirit? Did not you yourself, if you have ever had in you this temper, feel as though you were not your own in indulging it? as though you had something or some one else occupying the citadel of your being, and refusing to release you from the bondage? as though the dissipation of your gloom were absolutely out of your power, and the retention of anger a sort of duty laid upon you by an authority to which you were subjected? Yes, it is true, you are at such time under a Satanic, a diabolical influence: you are possessed by an evil spirit, and that spirit is dumb.

II. But it is not only in noticeable cases of bad temper that we see the same power working. Mark that man—his name, indeed, is Legion—who lives what is called an entirely preoccupied and self-engrossed life; who has his business and follows it, has his interests and pursues them, has even his pleasures and enjoys them, but in all these has in reality no partner and no associate; looks to himself, as to all that most intimately touches him, and himself only; excludes from his true confidence alike friend and brother, alike child and wife; gives out in social converse the merest superficialities of his thoughts, and in domestic intercourse the veriest dregs and refuse of his being; locks up in his own bosom the affections which God gave him for blessing, presupposes selfishness in others because he feels it in himself, and will trust no other soul with that confidence which he knows could have no reception and no reciprocity in his own. Does the description sound unamiable? It is so: this is not the man for love, because love is not in him; not the man to awaken tenderness, because the spirit of compassion is a stranger to him. The devil that possesses him is not debasing only, but dumb.

III. Let us approach more nearly to an universal experience. The cases hitherto described, however common, have exceptions. Some natural men are sweet-tempered: some natural men are benevolent and warm-hearted. But, when we think of the great purpose for which the gift of speech was bestowed upon us, we shall feel that there may be an absence, even in these, of that which makes speech man's glory. Let your speech be always with grace, S. Paul says, seasoned with salt. To talk about religion is not always to influence. It is not only, nor chiefly, by the actual introduction of holy things, that we ourselves have been most influenced towards holiness. It is rather by indication than by obtrusion of Christian principles; by

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an evident watch kept over the admission of vain and unprofitable things, by a firm faith cherished within, and a strong and steadfast charity maintained without, rather than by a frequent introduction of the name of Christ or the precepts of the gospel, that a Christian man will use his gift of speech in the service of his Master. But he does use it, and they who know not the cause oftentimes feel the effect.

Therefore, I say it most sincerely, with many of us, is it not true that as to any value, any worth, contained in the gift of speech, we might have been bereft of it? In the judgment of Him who heareth as well as seeth in secret, the spirit which has possessed us has been no better than a dumb spirit.

IV. It has been so towards men. We have done no good with our speech. And how has it been towards God? The text stands in immediate connection with a passage of Holy Scripture about prayer. Strong encouragement has been given to our halting, failing faith, in reference to the duty of seeking God in prayer. A form of prayer has been given, in answer to the request of the disciples, 'Lord, teach us to pray'; and words have been added, which show beyond all question that it is not in God but in ourselves that the work of prayer is straitened.

If I desired to impress upon any one's heart the meaning and the reality of original sin, I would speak to him of his prayers. I would say, Do not you perceive that your glory, as Scripture denominates your power of utterance, absolutely refuses to move in its highest, its noblest, and its most remunerative office, as the exponent of your wants in the ear of God? How can you doubt the fact that you are in evil case, how can you gainsay the fact of your corruption and of your degradation, when you find yourself under the mastery of some malign influence which absolutely prevents you from holding communion with your Father and your God in heaven? Yes, you are possessed indeed by the evil one; and the devil that is in you is indeed, towards God as towards man, a dumb spirit!

Let a man be convinced of his own misery and of his own ruin; let him humbly and earnestly call upon the Saviour of sinners to save him; let him day by day, and many times in each day, seek the cross and throne of Christ to obtain mercy and to find grace; let him place himself on Christ's side, and determine to know Him for himself not less as his Master than as his Propitiation; and depend upon it, the light within will soon, more or less, shine through; the still small voice which sounds daily in the soul will find an echo in the voice; he who was dumb shall begin to speak; and men will find there, in proportion as he drinks more deeply for himself of the water of life, not less a charm to attract than a power to influence. They will

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take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus ; and the words shall be fulfilled which say, ‘And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake, and the people wondered. All the people, when they heard him, gave praise unto God!’

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Intemperance.

He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.

S. LUKE XV. 23.

THERE is a warlike ring in these words—can they be the words of Him who was the Prince of Peace, at whose birth the angel choir sang their Christmas carol, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men’? Yes, they are the words of the Prince of Peace. But He was a man of war, too; He was at the head of a great army. Long before He came, it was prophesied of Him, ‘Behold, I have given Him for a leader and commander to the people’; and when He trod this earth He Himself told us why He had come—‘not to send peace, but a sword.’ The Prince of Peace and the man of war—how are we to reconcile these? It is very easy to do so, for in the imperfect conditions under which we live war is oftentimes the only road to real and lasting peace. Peace with dishonour is not only a disgrace, it is oftentimes disastrous in its consequences. It involves injury and causes bloodshed. Again and again it has been proved that war was a stern necessity, and ever since man fell this world of ours has been a battlefield. God Himself declared war when He said, ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.’ Ever since then the conflict has been waging, and good and evil have been contending one with another. It is a warfare. Yes; but the end is to be everlasting peace. It was to hasten this end, then, that the Prince of Peace came and lived upon this earth. His whole life was a great battle; His death was a great victory; His resurrection and His ascension were a great triumph; and in this evening’s lesson He tells us the nature of the work that He came to do upon earth. He came to bind the strong one; He came to crush the power of evil; but He came to succour the weak and helpless; He came to destroy the works of the devil; He came to deliver those who through their lifetime were held in bondage.

I. Is there not a cause for which to fight in these days? The powers of evil are busy; they never make truce; they never sleep; they are never idle. Evil is a hydra-headed monster assuming now one form,

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now another. One generation has its besetting sin, another generation has its besetting sin. Evil is always changing and taking different shapes in order that it may overcome its victim.

Intemperance is, so to speak, the national sin of the day in which we live. It is a very real evil. It finds its way into our very homes. It lays hold of those of whom we are most proud, and takes away those who are most dear to us. All come within its reach, old and young, rich and poor, scholar and fool, educated and ignorant, not only men, but—God help us—women; not only women, but—God help us—even little children. How terrible are the consequences of this sin of intemperance!

Sometimes when we urge the necessity of doing something to stamp out the evil, we are asked, Are there not other evils? Is there not the evil of gluttony, the evil of impurity, the evil of betting and gambling? Why do you not carry on a crusade against these? We do. These are the strong ones that must be bound, they have their captives that must be freed. But we venture to say that the consequences of all these together are not to be compared with the terrible consequences of intemperance.

Intemperance. It lies at the root of almost every sin; and there is tremendous truth in the story that is told of the man who is tempted to the three great sins of drunkenness, theft, and murder; and instead of at once repelling, he dallied with them, and then chose the sin of drunkenness, because there was no public disgrace or great penalty attaching to it. But when he awoke out of a drunken sleep and became sober he found that in his madness of drink he had become a thief and a murderer too. Terrible are the consequences of intemperance; they need no exaggeration; they speak for themselves. What ruin it brings upon the victim himself, both body and soul! The picture of the Prodigal Son is a true picture of every sinner; but it is never so true as of the man who is held captive by the sin of drunkenness. It wastes his body and soul; it enslaves him; it drags him down; it makes him the profaner of God's law, the neglecter of God's house, the blasphemer of God's name, the rejecter of God's Son. Ay, it steals away from man that which is alone worth having—his own self-respect; and angry strife—ay, often bloodshed—are the result of this sin. A bad father, a bad mother, a bad husband, a bad master, a bad mistress, a bad servant—this is a description of those who are held captive by the great tyrant of strong drink.

II. Is there nothing that you and I can do? There must be, for where would be the use of soldiers if there is no part in the war for them? And there are no neutrals. Upon one side or the other of the conflict we must take a part. Is there nothing that you and I

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can do? I venture to say that there is no one here present who cannot do something. We can all help to raise public opinion; we can all resist the drinking habits of the day; we can all refuse to put temptation in the way of others; we can all pray for the drunkard and our country; we can all combine and co-operate in one common effort to help forward the cause of temperance; we can all give and work in order to bring before the people counter-attractions to places of temptation. It is no use to go on denouncing intemperance if we do nothing to give the drunkard places of innocent recreation where he can find the companionship that all need.

But there is another way in which we can do our part in the battle. See, a ship has been driven in the darkness and the storm upon the rocks that surround our island home; great billows are breaking over her, and the crew are in great danger; they are crowding up into the rigging, clinging to it for dear life, waiting for succour. Something must be done; the lifeboat must be launched, and immediately many willing hands are at work. Ah! it is a good thing, is it not, to be allowed to help launch the boat into the waves, even though there is danger of being carried away by the great tide as it rolls upward. Ay, and it is good to be among those who cheer the crew as they get into the boat and prepare for their work. Ay, and it is good to make preparation for the shipwrecked ones when they are brought half-drowned but still alive to the shore. And it will be good to be among those who help to draw the lifeboat upon the sands again. But good as all these things are, there is something better, something grander. Better than these it is to be at hand to man the lifeboat which has to find its way over the great foaming billows; it were better to be one of those whose hands are stretched out to rescue those perishing ones amid the water. Yes; and it is to this work of manning the lifeboat that the National Temperance Union calls some of you to-night. It reminds you that total abstinence, though it is not the only way, is the better way, perhaps the best way. Violent diseases need violent remedies, and this prevailing sin calls upon some professing soldiers of Christ to take their place in the forefront of the battle. Again, it tells some of us that the lifeboat must not only be launched, and cheered, and preparations made for those brought to shore, but that the lifeboat must be manned. We live in days when all, I suppose, recognise that there is a legitimate place in this conflict for total abstinence. A great change has come over us in this matter. I can remember the time, not so very long ago, when total abstainers were made the object of ridicule or of hatred. But all this has changed: partly because men are learning to realise the importance of this conflict; and partly because total

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abstainers have grown wiser, and have come to realise that others can do something for the great cause as well as themselves. We all recognise, too, that there is a place for total abstainers among children; and that at any rate they may be brought up without strong drink, and be the better without it, and that if they never touch it they can never become its victims.

The force of example is stronger than many words; and what we do has more power than what we say. Why? Because it is written, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' And the law of Christ was that He pleased not Himself, but divested Himself of His glory, and laid by the things that were His by right, and stripped off the things that were beautiful, in order that He might stoop down to poor humanity as it lay low, in order that He might drag out of the mire those who had fallen into it.

C. J. RIDGEWAY.

Christ in His Word.

But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.
S. LUKE xi. 28.

I. CHRIST speaks, first, as it was remarked when He was upon earth by those who listened to Him, *with authority*. There are many things that we look for in a teacher. But there is one thing which we cannot dispense with: he must speak, if he is to do us any good, as one who has a right to speak; as one who knows that which he speaks of, and knows that it is thus and not otherwise. In a sense beyond that in which any man could be said to do so upon any subject, Christ taught, Christ teaches us still, with authority.

II. There is another point: Christ speaks *with insight*. We feel that He knows us. 'He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man.' Many teachers, even Christian teachers, do not give us this feeling. Their instructions sound unreal. They make us out, in their descriptions, to be, not so much worse, and not so much better, than we are—that is not exactly the point: but other than we are. Christ teaches with insight. He knows us well, for He made us and He became man. He knows us in our weakness, He knows us in our difficulties, He knows us in our sorrows, He knows us in our temptations. And, as He knows, so He teaches. He charges us with nothing but what is true, and He calls us to nothing but what is possible.

III. I will add that He teaches with conviction. I know that it is very easy to evade conviction. We may refuse to read; or we may

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so read as to answer the same object more effectually. One who does not read his Bible has an uneasy sense of sin in that neglect: the closed book itself convinces of sin. But one who reads his Bible as many read it, as all of us probably have, at some time or other of our lives, read it, can combine two things in his reading: he can lull his conscience by the idea of a duty done, and yet keep every arrow of conviction away from his reading. We must always remember that, in everything said of Christ's teaching, there is presupposed a learner; one who comes to be taught, and that, not as a form, but with a purpose. Where is that purpose in many of us? We all think how sad it was, and how wrong, that any one should listen to Christ Himself, when He was upon earth, with indifference, or prejudice, or perverseness, or scorn: but is it not more sad, and more wrong, that we should any of us do so in our hearts now; we who do profess to know what He is, and to be concerned in the salvation which He bought for us with His own blood? I am sure it is the case that to many of us the Bible, even Christ's own words in it, carry practically no conviction. Alas, how is it? Because there is not in us a willing, a desiring mind; that mind of which He spoke Himself when He said, 'He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.' It is a very responsible thing to be taught of Christ,

IV. Again, Christ teaches with variety, and teaches with abundance. Some springs are soon dry. It is so with all merely human teaching. Every man has his topic; has his favourite doctrine; has his special case in view; has, at best, his strong point or two in dealing with human consciences. When you have heard him a few times, you are in his secret; you see the skill, or the weakness, as it may be, and you know how he will treat almost any given subject. The stream is shallow; you can touch the bottom. But it is not so with the teaching of Jesus Christ. His words are various. There is not a case, not a kind of case, in human character or in human life, which he has not a medicine for.

V. It is another remarkable point in Christ's words, that He teaches by principles, and teaches by illustration.

Christ teaches by principles and not by formal rules. He teaches by a gradual assimilation of our judgments and feelings on all points to His own. A man cannot supersede, by a special and sudden recourse to his Bible on an emergency, that continued and patient study of it which another has pursued through days and years of ordinary and unmarked life. Let him indeed turn to it at any time; let that sudden turning to it be the beginning of a new life to him; but let him not complain, let him not be disappointed, if the Bible be not all at once to him guiding and comforting, if he has to pass,

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as others have done, to that stage of Christian experience through another less bright and bringing a less immediate recompense.

In the life and death of Christ lies the sum of all the teaching of Christ. In leaving us an example, that we might follow His steps, He left us that which alone could perfectly guide us in the way in which we should go; that way which an Apostle has briefly described in these words: 'that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings; being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

VI. Once more, notice the tenderness and the holiness of Christ's teaching.

1. The word of Christ must never be dissociated in our thoughts from Christ the word. The Bible itself will profit us nothing, unless we not only read it as from Christ, but also read it in Christ; read it as those who belong to Him, as those whom He has taken for His own redeemed and for His own disciples and servants, and whose life, and hope, and Saviour, and Lord, He Himself is.

2. Lastly, the word of Christ can only really act upon us through the spirit of Christ. 'If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The History of Joseph.

GENESIS xxxix.-xlv.



THE history of Joseph the Patriarch is one whose beauties fascinate us in childhood and delight us in our mature years; rich as are the beauties of the story, and abounding as does its recital in touches of exquisite pathos, yet it is undeniable there are things in it hard to be understood, and some portions of Joseph's conduct strike us at first sight as singularly inexplicable. Why this man of holiness and tenderness should have spoken roughly to his brethren—accusing them of being spies—binding Simeon as an hostage of their return—why he directed his steward to hide his cup in Benjamin's sack, and on this chosen one of his affections to fix the suspicion of robbery,—these, and the like questions, are naturally suggested by an

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attentive perusal of the record; and our time will be profitably occupied in searching out satisfactory answers; for answers by no means satisfactory have often been given.

I. It may be, that some of you have frequently perused the history of Joseph, yet have never observed much that seemed to require explanation; yet, surely, there is much to wonder at in the line of conduct which Joseph pursued. Why was it he so long, and by artifices so strange, delayed the disclosure which an affectionate heart must have been yearning to make? There is a question antecedent to this, which forces itself on the student of the narrative, and to which Scripture can scarcely be said to furnish a reply. How came it that Joseph had made no inquiries after his family, or had not attempted to have intercourse with his father, during the many years that Jacob had been bewailing his loss? For more than twenty years had elapsed from his having been sold to the Ishmaelites to his meeting his brethren; yet he does not seem to have sent a single message to Jacob, though there was free communication between Egypt and Canaan. Fourteen of those years he had, indeed, been in trouble, and it may not have been in his power to transmit any account of himself; but, for the last six years, he had been ruler over the land, and you might have expected the first use made of his authority would have been to obtain tidings of his father—to ascertain whether he survived—and, if he did, to minister to his comforts in his declining years. And yet it appears that Joseph did nothing of the kind; he attempted no intercourse with his family, though his circumstances were such that, if attempted, it would have been readily effected. And there is nothing, as we have said, in Scripture to furnish us with a thorough explanation of this; we have simply the fact, and we can only believe that Joseph acted thus strangely out of obedience to a direct intimation from God, who had wise purposes to answer, by deferring for a time his being restored to his family. It is evident that Joseph considered himself as finally separated from his brethren, for we read, as his reason for calling his first-born Manasseh, ‘God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house.’ It might be inferred from this expression, that Joseph regarded it as an appointment of God that he should forget his father’s house; at all events, there is ground enough for concluding that it was through divine direction that he abstained from making himself known; and though strange would be the silence of Joseph, if you supposed it to have proceeded from his own will, yet there are reasons enough to vindicate it, if maintained at the bidding of God. We would have you remember that Jacob had to undergo the retribution of his grievous fault, in having deceived Isaac, his father, and gained, by fraud, the blessing. The retribution com-

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menced when he himself was deceived by Laban, who gave him Leah for Rachel ; but it did not reach its full measure till he, in turn, was imposed on by his own sons, who persuaded him that Joseph was slain. God alone could determine for how long a time it was just that Jacob should be a victim of this cruel imposition ; yet, when we understand that his being deceived was in recompense of his having deceived Isaac, we may readily believe that Joseph was not sooner allowed to make himself known, because the punishment of Jacob was not sooner complete. It would not be difficult to suppose other reasons ; for, by effecting in so circuitous a manner, and after so long a time, the reunion of Joseph with the house of his father, God afforded occasions for the display of His overruling power and providence, which hardly could have occurred on any other supposition, and which could not have been wanting but with great loss to the Church in every age. But, admitting that Joseph acted under the direction of God, in remaining so many years without intercourse with his father, and that therefore his silence is no proof of want of good affection, what are we to say of his conduct when his brethren were brought actually before him ; of his harsh language ; of his binding Simeon ; of his putting the cup in Benjamin's sack ?

II. Joseph, it must be remembered, was an injured man, and the persons with whom he is called upon to deal are those from whose hands his injuries had come. To a man of less pious feeling, the temptation would have been strong, of using his present superiority in avenging the wrongs which had been heaped upon his youth ; but you can trace no revengeful intention in the actions of Joseph, and it should dispose you to regard what is strange in his conduct under the most favourable point of view, that even the strangeness can never be said to amount to vindictiveness. He certainly dealt roughly with his brethren ; but this harsh demeanour was necessary to the furtherance of his views, and was laid aside as soon as its end had been answered. While, however, Joseph had no thought of avenging himself on his brethren, he must still have borne in mind the evil of their characters ; and knowing them, by sad experience, to have been men of deceit and cruelty, he would be naturally suspicious both of the uprightness of their actions and of the veracity of their words. Now, if we keep this in mind, it will serve as a clue to much that is intricate. It was Joseph's ruling desire to obtain accurate tidings as to the existence and welfare of Jacob and Benjamin. Many years had rolled away since treachery and violence had torn him from his father—he had been as one dead unto his kindred, and his kindred as the dead unto him ; therefore when his brethren who hated him, and cast him out, suddenly stood before him, his first impulse must have been to ascertain whether his father and the brother of his affections

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were yet among the living; and why, then, you may say, did he not follow the impulse—make himself known, and propose the question? Ah! he knew his brethren to be cruel and deceitful; they might have hated and practised against Benjamin, as they had done in regard to himself: and it was clear that, if Benjamin also had been their victim, they, when they found themselves in the power of Joseph, would have invented some false account as a shield from the anger which the truth must have provoked. Hence, the method of direct questioning was not open to Joseph: he therefore tries an indirect method; brings an accusation against his brethren, the accusation of being spies, which he knew could only be refuted by some appeal to their domestic or national circumstances. Thus he throws them off their guard, and by making it their interest to tell the truth, he diminishes in a measure the likelihood of falsehood. ‘Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land are ye come.’ ‘Nay, my lord,’ they make answer, ‘thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.’ Joseph’s design is so far successful; he elicits a reference to the persons about whom he was anxious, and his heart, no doubt, beat high when the reference was made: but the reference is singularly unsatisfactory. ‘The youngest is this day with our father.’ This would be true, if both were in their graves, or both exiles: probably, the vagueness of the statement heightened, rather than lulled, the suspicions of Joseph. Unsatisfied, but yet unable to try open inquiry, Joseph persists in a plan which would have the double effect of bringing truth to light and of rescuing Benjamin, if indeed he were oppressed. He treats his brethren as spies, but afterwards allows nine to depart, retaining Simeon as an hostage, making it the condition of his release that Benjamin should return with the rest. Thus far, we ask you, was not the conduct of Joseph intelligible and unexceptionable? He wanted information which he could not procure by ordinary means, therefore he took extraordinary means; for, if the brethren never returned, he would know too well that Benjamin had perished; but, if they returned, and brought Benjamin with them, his happiness would be complete. Hence, then, this harshness—though, by taking care that his brethren should depart laden with corn, and every man with his money in his sack, did he not, after all, give sufficient proof that the harshness was but assumed, and that kindness, the warmest and truest, was uppermost in his breast?

III. But what shall we say of Joseph’s conduct, when his brethren returned and brought Benjamin with them? It is somewhat more difficult to explain. Strange, that in place of at once falling upon Benjamin’s neck, Joseph should have used deceit, to make him seem

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a robber! Though the long delay of his brethren in Canaan might have strengthened the suspicions of Joseph, yet his suspicions must all have disappeared, when Benjamin stood actually before him; and we hardly see why he need have put upon himself the painful restraint so pathetically described. 'He made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.' And yet still he did not make himself known to his brethren, but allowed them to depart, providing, by the concealment of the cup, for the after interruption of their journey. We may suppose that, through this strange artifice, Joseph sought to ascertain the disposition of the ten brethren towards Benjamin; there was no doubt but that he was planning the bringing of the whole family to settle in Egypt, and it was needful, before carrying out this plan, that he should know whether the whole family were well agreed, or whether they were still divided by factions and jealousies: thus, by putting Benjamin apparently in peril, convicting him of theft, and then declaring his intention of punishing by enslaving him, he was morally sure of discovering the real feelings of the rest. For if they hated Benjamin as they had hated him, they would treat his fate with indifference; whereas, if he were in any measure dear to them, the fact would become evident by the manifested emotions.

Such appears to us the most probable solution of this part of Joseph's conduct; for if the brethren cared nothing for Benjamin, they would readily leave him in bondage, and then Joseph would have the satisfaction of retaining with him and making happy the brother whom he tenderly loved; but if, on the contrary, the ten brethren were attached to Benjamin, the attachment would be shown when they saw him in danger, and Joseph might then confidently proceed with his design of settling the family in Egypt. The artifice succeeded—the agony which the ten brethren displayed, when they heard that Benjamin must be kept as a bondsman, put out of question that the son of Jacob's old age was beloved by the children of Leah, and removed the natural apprehension that the feuds of early years remained to mar the plan with which Joseph was occupied.

We may draw from the history of Joseph lessons and considerations of no ordinary kind. There is no history in Scripture which more forcibly sets forth the great truth of a superintending providence—nor is there any truth in which we all have a closer and more personal interest. How mistaken was the patriarch Jacob, when he pathetically exclaimed: 'Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me!' 'All these things' were for him, and not against him. It was in and through this series of distressing,

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and apparently adverse events, that God was graciously providing for the preservation of Jacob and his family. Joseph recognised this fact, and used it to assuage the remorse felt by his brethren, when he had made himself known. 'God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance; so now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.' Let us learn from this to submit, not merely with patience, but with hopefulness, to disaster and disappointment, believing that God, who has all agencies at His disposal, may be carrying on a purpose of mercy, and securing an issue of gladness, through things which may seem fraught with present fears, and threaten us with future! The doctrine of God's superintending providence cannot be made more personal, or more interwoven with the affairs of every day life, than is warranted by Scripture; for while the Bible tells me that the very hairs of my head are all numbered, I am not to be put off with such a doctrine of divine providence as would make God watchful over the general, but indifferent to the individual. We cannot so extend the doctrine of a special providence as to lead Christians to expect direct and visible interferences in their behalf, or immediate and open answers to prayer, or such ocular and undeniable leadings of God as when, with Israel of old, there went before them the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day; nor would we have the doctrine pared down and stripped of all its preciousness to the believer; or made so cold a thing, out of deference to the dread of enthusiasm, that it shall hardly be worth maintaining as a source of personal comfort. I do believe, in the largest and the truest sense, that 'the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord': I do believe, to quote again the words of the Psalmist, that God is 'about my path, and about my bed, and spieth out all my ways.' I believe this in no large or indefinite sense, but in the most personal and individual sense; being persuaded that any one of us who may be faithfully endeavouring to serve God, is as truly and as thoroughly an object of divine inspection and guardianship, as though he were alone in the universe, in place of being but one amongst unnumbered myriads, who all equally hang upon the bounty and engage the solitudes of the Almighty Creator. What comfort and support there is in this doctrine, when it has possession of the heart, and is interwoven with all the business of life!

'All these things are against me.' And you? By griefs God would but discipline you for a brighter existence; if you will but submit to the fatherly chastisement, the issue will be your being led towards that land, where the lost one, it may be, awaits your coming. Jacob exclaims, 'Joseph, my son, is yet alive: I will go down and see him before I die';—you, entering not Egypt, but Canaan, may be

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able to feel, 'My child, my child is yet alive; I will go up and see him, and be with him for ever.'

H. MELVILL.

The Typical History of Joseph.

GENESIS xxxix.-xlv.

I. JOSEPH, in his younger days, was distinguished from his brethren by a purity of life, which became the more observable in contrast with their dissolute manners, and which caused an 'evil report' to be brought to their father. Visions of future greatness were vouchsafed him by the Lord—the 'sun, moon, and stars' of his family had been seen doing homage to his ascendancy, as though to fix on him the typical character, predicting the dominion of Christ, before whom the whole human family shall finally bow. Joseph's brethren had gone to feed their flocks in Shechem; and Jacob determined to send him to them, that he might know how they were. And was it not thus that God resolved to send His Son to the Jews, the descendants of the Patriarch, that he might inquire, in the words of the prophet, 'Where is the flock that was given thee—thy beautiful flock?' We read of Joseph's brethren, that 'they saw him afar off,' even as the Jews saw Christ, prefigured as He had been from the earliest days. And when Joseph's brethren saw him afar off, they conspired to kill him. Is not this too true a picture of the Jews? For all the notions they had long been cherishing, the practices in which they had been indulging, were so many preparations for rejecting a Saviour, who should come to them in humility, and inculcate righteousness. But when Joseph reached his brethren, they cared not to hear the kind message which he brought, but insulted him as a dreamer who had fancied himself their king, and, stripping him of his 'coat of many colours,' proceeded to take measures for putting him to death. How similar was the treatment which Christ experienced from His brethren! He was reviled by them for having declared Himself 'the King of the Jews'! He was stripped too of His vesture, as preparatory to His being cruelly slain. Indeed, the murderous project was not fulfilled upon Joseph, but its interpretation only gave occasion for another typical correspondence; for after he had been cast into a pit, avarice (as it would appear) suggested to Judah the selling him to some Ishmaelites who were passing by, in preference to leaving him to die of hunger and thirst. We cannot but suppose that Judah was actuated by covetousness, for his proposal to sell Joseph was prefaced by the question, 'What profit is it if we slay our brother?' Then the accursed bargain is made—for a

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few pieces of silver the innocent Joseph is delivered as a captive. And who can fail to feel reminded, how Judas, bearing the very name of the seller of Joseph, moved by the very same base lust of money, betrayed for thirty pieces of silver the immaculate Jesus into the hands of His oppressors!

II. We have now closed the first portion of the eventful life of Joseph, but he will reappear in another scene, and be yet more strikingly and comprehensively typical. He is carried into Egypt, even as was Christ, in His earliest days, as prophecy had long before determined—‘Out of Egypt have I called my Son.’ He was carried down in a degraded character, having none of the affluence belonging to him as the well-beloved son of his father. Just so Christ, ‘who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor,’ entered the world, of which Egypt was a figure, as a prisoner in the flesh, divested of all the glory which appertained to Him as a person of the Godhead. But, nevertheless, Joseph, though placed in so mean a condition, soon displayed such wisdom and probity as secured him the chief station in the house of his master, and caused the whole administration of affairs to be given into his hands. It was thus in a measure with Christ—the meanness of His condition could not keep under the sense of His superiority; He was confessedly conspicuous above all others; the miracles which He wrought proclaiming dominion over every department of nature, declared Him, though officiating in the form of a servant, invested with all power over the universal household. Yet, notwithstanding Joseph’s unimpeachable goodness, malice and false accusation prevailed against him; and we all know how successfully such weapons were brought to bear upon Jesus, though He ‘had done no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.’ Joseph was cast into prison, emblematic of the casting of Jesus into the grave, the prison of death; and we cannot but mark the singular correspondence between the circumstances of the imprisonment and those of the death. Joseph was imprisoned with two accused persons—the chief butler and the chief baker of Pharaoh; Christ was crucified between two malefactors. Of the two imprisoned with Joseph, one, according to his saying, was exalted to dignity, the other put to death; of the two crucified with Jesus, the penitent thief entered Paradise, and of the other we can only believe that he died the second death. We may also observe, that it was on the third day that Jesus rose, and in the third year that Joseph was liberated; while the fact, that while Joseph was in prison the keeper of the prison gave all into his hand, seems not obscurely to foreshadow, that by descending into the grave Christ would gain mastery over death and the invisible world.

III. But it is as a liberated man that Joseph is most signally

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the type of our Redeemer; for no sooner is he delivered from oppression, than he is exalted to the highest station, and invested with the largest power. The whole land of Egypt was submitted to his control; the ensigns of magistracy were placed upon his person, and the command went forth, that all who passed should bow the knee before him. Strange and sudden transition! from a captive in a dungeon to the being universal lord, with but one superior—the monarch on the throne! yet it was a transition which accurately imaged that of the Redeemer, who, springing from the prison of the grave, became possessed in His mediatorial capacity of all power in heaven and earth, and yet so possessed as to be subordinate to the Father, to whom at length He will render up His delegated authority. Like Joseph, He was highly exalted, and received ‘a name above every name,’ to which it was commanded that every knee should bow; but, like Joseph, there was One, though only One, to whom He was second; the mediatorial kingdom being all along subordinate to the divine, and appointed to be lost in it when its end shall have been answered. And wherefore was it that Joseph was thus raised to power, and second to none but the monarch on his throne? The time of plenty was no sooner passed than Christ entered on His office of Mediator, and began to distribute bread to the needy; for, even in patriarchal days, He partially revealed Himself, under the dispensation of the law, and more largely communicated spiritual food, teaching those who were ‘hungering and thirsting after righteousness’ to eat of the sacrifice which should be presented in the fulness of time. Yet it was not until, like Joseph, He had passed from a prison to a throne, that He became visibly and without disguise the distributor of bread to the nations. Then, when He had ‘taken to Himself His power,’ and began to exercise the sovereignty won by humiliation, there went forth the edict of heaven to the starving multitudes: ‘Go to Jesus—what He saith unto you, do. He hath at His disposal all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom: under His hand are the inexhaustible riches of grace—He “openeth, and no man shutteth”; He “shutteth, and no man openeth.”’ And the granaries—the mighty granaries—flung wide their door to the whole human population: it mattered nothing whence came the perishing—all were welcome—all were invited—they all were entreated to buy for themselves and little ones, ‘without money and without price.’ So ample were the provisions of redemption—so rich the supplies of that bread, of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever—if that spiritual famine yet prevailed in any district of the earth, it was only because men had not heard of the corn that was in Egypt, or were not willing to come to Christ, and receive from His fulness. But myriads have already come: in many a land, there is, comparatively, no longer

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destitution. It cannot, indeed, grow corn for itself, but it draws from the everlasting storehouse, that its every family may be satisfied. It may be, in other lands, the inhabitants are like the Prodigal Son, feeding upon husks, pining away, stricken through want of the fruits of the field; but the rumour is fast going round the earth, that there is corn in Egypt; and we have earnest enough, in the gatherings from various parts, in the spreadings of Christianity, in the diminution of idolatry, that there shall yet dawn a day when, even as it was that men from all countries flocked to Joseph for sustenance, so shall it be from all countries—the east, the west, the north, and south—that men shall flock to Jesus, eager for the bread that came down from heaven; and thus will be gloriously accomplished whatsoever was predicted by the type. There will be abundance—spiritual abundance—through Him who laid down His life for the world; and the teeming myriads of the human population shall take of the substance and eat and be satisfied.

H. MELVILL.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

S. Paul to Philemon.

For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever. PHILEMON 15.



CONSIDER a few obvious reflections upon this brief epistle.

I. How large a testimony does this brief epistle bear to the essential doctrines of the gospel! Suppose that this one short chapter were all that had come down to us from the first days of Christianity. I do not say that we should not have been the losers beyond all calculation by the loss of other and more copious inspired writings. But should we not have possessed something, even in this one letter, to aid us in the ascertainment of evangelical and apostolical doctrine? God our Father: and our Lord Jesus Christ associated with Him in the communication of gifts to man: and those gifts what? grace and peace; free favour, and spiritual repose and tranquillity in the sense of it: faith in Christ the starting-point of all progress; knowledge the means of progress; and love to Christ and to Christ's redeemed the effect and the aim of all. Yes, with these few verses alone in our possession, we should not

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have been desolate, we should scarcely have been poor, in Christian knowledge or in the materials of Christian life.

II. But still more strongly may I ask you to notice what a beautiful exhibition we have in this epistle of that which in every age has been the distinctively Christian character. What a combination of opposite qualities is here revealed to us in one person! Dignity and humility. 'I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient . . . I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.' There is no masking of real claims to respect and gratitude. There is no degradation nor disparagement of the holy office which was entrusted to him. He was an Apostle of Christ, and, as such, he had a right to speak, yes, a right to dictate. Yet, on the other hand, how graceful, too, how becoming, the humility with which he would by preference take a lower ground; would beseech rather than enjoin; would bring forward, if possible, only that which was most persuasive, most attractive, and in the background, if it could be done without neglect of duty, all that was merely authoritative, official, and imperative. 'For love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ . . . if thou count me a partner, receive him as myself . . . yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord.' There is no touch of weakness in all this. There is no necessary connection between tenderness and feebleness. The greatest strength of man—or may we not say, the greatest strength of Him who is God as well as man?—is shown, not in command, but in sympathy.

III. The epistle before us is a model of Christian correspondence. S. Paul is here writing a letter to a friend on what we might call by comparison an everyday topic. He is urging a request, and supporting it with the earnestness of a very real man, upon a subject affecting another and (humanly speaking) a very insignificant person. Now I ask no one to write a letter, or to attempt to write one, in the phraseology of S. Paul or of any other inspired writer. Phrases imported from Scripture into modern letters seldom fit in naturally; seldom give that impression of heart-to-heart simplicity, which is the first condition of persuasiveness. But, on the other hand, I am quite sure that great opportunities of usefulness are daily lost by our neglect of this engine. People write so hastily, so impulsively, with so slight a sense of responsibility, and, I must say, with so little desire to do good, that it is not to be wondered at if little good is thus done, or if letters come to be regarded only as necessary evils, lying altogether out of the reach of the inspired direction, 'Whatsoever ye do, in word, or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' I call attention to the subject, being convinced that a want of attention to it is more than half the fault.

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IV. Finally, the epistle before us is an example of the way in which God has been sometimes pleased to bless a condition of obscurity. It was S. Paul's imprisonment which gave to the Church the most touching and soothing of all his letters. Those to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, the second to Timothy, not to mention the one now before us, were all written from a prison. Perhaps he little knew at the time what was in store for these works of his seclusion. But God foresaw it all. God saw that in thus laying His servant aside, and giving him what he might have been tempted to call useless years, He was providing for the everlasting good of ten thousand times ten thousand souls.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Devil's Volunteers.

Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! S. MATTHEW xviii. 7.

I WANT to speak about a sin as terrible as it is, unhappily, common; and one that is peculiarly devilish in its nature—the sin of hindering any one who is trying to do right; of encouraging, inciting, or helping others to do wrong.

I. There is a moral Vandalism, which in its worst forms is rampant most in civilised nations; which has no belief in goodness of any kind, no reverence for the beauty of innocence, no pity for weakness, no respect for the courage which self-conquest involves, which says of all that is pure, all that is good, ‘Down with it, away with it! Who wants it?’

It is this moral Vandalism which is included in the text, and of which I am speaking. I said it was a form of sin peculiarly devilish. Well, I say so again, deliberately. For Satan never sees beauty, but he longs to disfigure it; he never sees purity, but he desires to corrupt it; he never sees brightness, but he longs to darken it for ever and for ever. And this is precisely what they are trying to do who corrupt innocence, or make life hard for those who are striving to walk aright.

The Prince of Darkness numbers his volunteers by tens of thousands. No doubt there are certain periods in the world's history when the numbers go up terribly, and others in which they fall considerably; but there is never one month in a century in which the supply fails, or the enrolment of these volunteers ceases.

II. Note some of the channels through which the offence comes.

1. There is corrupt literature. Is it not a horrible, a sickening thought, that there are people who can turn their abilities to such vile uses as this?

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2. Then there is corrupt conversation. By it you are polluting the very atmosphere, and, as a consequence, poisoning all who come near.

3. Then there is that very common 'offence'—laughing at religion, and jeering at religious people.

In spite of you and your jeers, religion will stand—it will go on flourishing in the world long after you are in your grave and repenting in another world. You cannot destroy Christ's religion, but—a fearful thought—you may destroy souls!

'Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!'

J. B. C. MURPHY.

The Danger of Relapse.

If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. HEB. x. 38

IT is not obvious to every one, on first hearing the word, that 'relapse' is synonymous with 'backsliding.' It is the Latin form of that English word. And yet it seems to convey to us a more real and tangible sense. Backsliding is a term appropriated to religious subjects: relapse is a term of wider use, applicable to bodily as well as spiritual matters, and in the same proportion, as it appears to me, more natural and more significant.

In either case, you will notice that the force of the word lies in its indication of a gradual process. A relapse is a gliding or slipping back. There is nothing in it of suddenness or of violence. Whatever the result may be, however unexpected or however fatal, the word denotes that the process and progress towards it have been easy and perhaps imperceptible. And we shall readily understand that in that particular point lies the main risk and peril.

To give something of clearness and definiteness to the remarks now to be made upon it, we may separate the two cases, of act, and of spirit; of particular habits and tendencies, and of the general mind and life. In each of these there may be either a progress towards recovery, or else a relapse: and the danger of relapse will be sufficiently evident when we draw out into a few serious thoughts the thing which that word indicates.

I. And first in its reference to particular acts and habits.

All of us have known, either for ourselves, or in those near to us, what it is to fall into a bad habit. Habits are of all kinds: it is a word which we use indiscriminately with reference to small things and great; to bodily, mental, and spiritual acts; to matters which are mere tricks of manner or gesture, as well as to grave moral concerns on which the life or death of the soul may hang.

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The life of many a young man is a life of disquiet, of unrest—happier if of conflict. Many fight not at all, but yield to their sin day by day. Many repent of it every morning, and before night as regularly are again fallen. Some—many, we are sure, these also—are awakened, under some one of those many providential influences for good which are always counterworking the snares and mines of evil, to a deep sense of the sinfulness of sin, and to an earnest and effectual repentance, shown, as true repentance is sure to be, by a recovery, under God's grace daily sought and cherished, from the dominion and bondage of their sin. Though life can no longer be ignorant of evil, or (in one sense) innocent of evil, it may yet be cleansed and purged from evil; graver, sadder, than once it was, but not therefore disconsolate, and not therefore unblessed, and not therefore inoperative for the highest and noblest good. If a young man can cleanse his way, by taking heed thereto according to God's word, he may still do a good life's work, and be owned by Christ at His coming.

But, alas! how great, in every such instance, will be the danger of relapse! When sin seems to have been entirely put away, how quickly, how suddenly, does it reappear! nay, how close by us it seems to have been standing all the time! Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

II. We turn now to the latter part of the subject, and would speak of the danger of relapse in reference to the spiritual state generally, rather than to particular habits of life.

Every glance cast backward upon the things behind must have one effect at least amongst others; that of showing us the precariousness (humanly speaking) of the Christian life; its slow and intermittent growth; its liability to reverses and relapses; its exposure to innumerable influences and accidents; its wonderful fluctuations and its too frequent vacillations.

Ye are idle, ye are idle—well might it be said to us—and then lay upon human infirmity, or else almost upon divine appointment, the blame of a result which you could have foreseen and with which you are chargeable. We do not take the pains with our souls which we ought. It would be a daily miracle if our bodies were kept in health without food: why should we expect a like thing in the soul?

The subject which has engaged us is one of melancholy tone and sound: but every word of God has its bright side also. The danger of relapse is great and formidable: no one in this life is exempt from it. Rich and poor, high and low, learned and unlearned, old and young, all are in danger of sliding back, of becoming backwarder than now in the Christian race, of actually drawing back unto perdition. Such is the reality of the danger in its last and most fear-

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ful development. But the sense of danger, realised betimes, is not a terror but a caution: it is given to us that we may be both warned and armed against it: and the same Scripture which tells us of the danger tells us also how to counteract it.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Guilt.

My heart sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly, but there is no fear of God before his eyes, for he flattereth himself in his own sight until his abominable sin be found out. PSALM XXXvi. 1, 2.

I. **T**HERE are many different degrees of guilt, and many different classes of guilty men. First, and perhaps most numerous, are the unhappy weaklings, self-defeated by their own passion. They live two lives in one. They are swayed by opposite impulses, of which the one feebly longs for God and the other hopelessly yields to evil. They are torn to pieces by the conflict of a divided being, hating what they do and yet doing it; loathing what they are and yet being it; seeing and approving that which is better and selling themselves to that which is worse. Then there are lost souls madly misled by passion and the susceptibilities of genius. With them the beginning of sin has been as the letting out of water, till its fierce stream has swept away every barrier of reason and religion. Then there are the backsliders who, having been once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly calling, have done despite unto the Spirit of Grace, and counted the blood of their redemption a common thing. They are the class of which Judas on the pages of the gospel, and Francis of Spire in the days of the Reformation, stand as the frightful representatives. Last, and perhaps worst of all, are the reprobates who are 'past feeling,' who have sold themselves to do evil, who 'work all uncleanness with greediness,' who not only do evil things, but tempt others also to do them, and 'have pleasure in them that do them.'

Sin may sleep, but God does not forget. Sinners are awakened, and often by a thunder-clap. And how does God awaken them from their trance and dream of security? If any one of you be guilty men or women—guilty and impenitent—how will God awaken you? In various ways. I would ask you to mark them. Sometimes by irretrievable failure in one high wish or noble end of a man's wasted life. Take the case of the great Count de Mirabeau. Genius he had, splendid eloquence, magnificent courage. He was, and he knew that

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he was, in the days of the French Revolution the one man who could have saved France. Had he lived, France might never have had to pass through the blood bath of the Reign of Terror. But one thing was wanting to him, and that one thing was character. He was soiled with sensual shame, shattered alike in constitution and in influence by inordinate passions and moral excesses. Often he used to lament with tears over his own falls and follies; but the sins of his youth came flowing back upon him in their drowning muddy tide. The miseries which he alone could have held back burst from all sides upon unhappy France, and his life, ruined by uncleanness, was mainly a 'might have been' and a 'might have done.'

II. And sometimes God's awakening punishment of guilt comes, not by irretrievable failure from without, but by blighting misery from within. Again take an instance. When Christ hung upon the cross Tiberius Cæsar was Emperor of Rome. Wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, powerful even to the satiety of ambition, strong and beautiful till vice had made him leprous and decrepit, steeping himself in every pleasure, each the very insanity of concupiscence, without a conscience to advise, was Tiberius Cæsar happy? His contemporary historian tells us that he was by common consent the miserablest of men. He himself wrote to his own Senate in these words: 'Fathers, may all the gods and goddesses destroy me more utterly than I feel that they are daily destroying me if I know what to do or whither to turn.' Yes, if no outward punishment at all befall the guilty, they are still made their own executioners, and God puts into their own souls the fury and the scourge.

III. And, thirdly, God sometimes awakens guilt by detection. I have no time to dwell on its strange unexpectedness, on its inevitable certainty, but, O guilty soul, which hearest me and hast not repented, be sure thy sin will find thee out. Achan's theft lay buried in his tent, but Joshua brought Israel by tribes and the tribe of Judah was taken; and in Judah, house by house, the Zarhites were taken; and of the Zarhites, family by family, Zabdi was taken; and of Zabdi's family, man by man, Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken; and Joshua said unto Achan, 'Tell me now what thou hast done.' Even so do God's lots leap out from the urn of judgment though man shakes them not. In our National Gallery you may see a very popular picture, of which one incident is a detective laying his hand on the shoulder of an escaped felon as he steps into a first-class carriage. The man's face is ghastly as ashes and distorted with horror. Critics said that it was exaggerated, that it was melodramatic. The painter himself told me that those who were familiar with such scenes had assured him that it was exactly true to the reality when, slow Justice having overtaken

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man at last, he finds that her hand is iron and that her blow is death.

IV. And, fourthly, God sometimes awakens men from the intoxication of guilt with natural retributive consequences, all the brood of calamity fatally resembling their parent sin. It may again long be delayed. To-day may be like yesterday, yet one day will come for all sinners and then woe, woe, woe! and nothing but darkness. Though God came not to Adam till evening, yet He came; and although the fire fell not on Sodom till the evening, yet it fell. And so comes the judge. The man goes on his guilty path towards his guilty end, but at last, in a narrow way, where there is no turning and there is a wall on either side, he meets the angel of the Lord standing face to face with him, and there is a drawn sword in that angel's hand. And sometimes, again, God awakens men from guilt, and I know not whether this be not the most terrible punishment of all, by simply leaving them to themselves, and leaving their sins to swell into their own natural developments.

V. And sometimes, lastly, God awakens men from sin by death. I believe that the vast majority of suicides have their origin in this remorse for guilt, or horror of its consequences. A poet who knew what remorse of conscience was compares the mind that broods over guilty woe to the scorpion, which, when it is placed in a circle of fire darts its felonious sting into its own brain.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

Darkness.

'Ye were once darkness.' EPHESIANS v. 8.

I. **T**HE darkness of the world.

'Darkness in the abstract; as if he had said blind and full of vice; as "wickedness" for a very wicked person. Ye lived in the shadow of unbelief, and ignorance of God; of impurity and vicious life; for all these are signified by the word "darkness," as, on the other hand, by the word "light" is signified knowledge of God and faith in Him, purity and sanctity of life.

'The divine poem of the creation, to borrow the image of a Father of the Church, has been interrupted; the determination to be free has had fatal consequences for man himself and for the earth, which, given to him as the theatre of his activity, has become that of his perpetual chastisement, till he mingles dust with dust. It is not, then, his own work that God has to correct, as if it had been originally

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imperfect and wanting ; it is a helping hand which He holds out to a creature lost and miserable through his own fault.'

II. Light in and by the coming of Christ.

'The commencement of our era is marked by a very peculiar condition of soul, represented in the literature of the times, a blending of degradation, morbid voluptuousness, effete scepticism, and restless aspiration. This attitude of the spiritual world found its most perfect symbol in the inscription, "to the Unknown God," which S. Paul read at Athens over one of the countless altars of that idolatrous city. It is not, in fact, a more complete doctrine, but a new divine manifestation, that the world is waiting for. We do not deny that some few of the social reforms of the gospel were faintly anticipated at this time ; but of what avail is a floating, cloudy idea, which is incapable of transfusing itself into heart and act? What is it, after all, but a distracting ideal, invoking a manifestation of power to realise it? The higher the ancient world is lifted in an ideal point of view, without losing sight of its uncertainties and fatal errors, the more palpable is the need for a new religion, which with light should bring strength.'

S. J. EALES.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

*Self-Sacrificing
Service.*

EPH. v. 14.

A HEATHEN king who was wounded in battle sent in his dying hours for his trusted servant, and said to him, 'Go, tell the dead I come.' The soldier-servant, without hesitating for a moment, drew his sword and stabbed himself to the heart, that he might go to the dead before his master, and prepare them for his coming. Oh that we had this spirit of service and of sacrifice for the King of kings! In His dying hour, He also said to us, 'Go, tell the dead I come.'

*Repentance will
not come to us.*

2 S. PET. iii. 9.

WE are directed to come to repentance (2 Peter iii. 9), and not to look that repentance should come to us. Seek for wisdom as for silver, and as thou diggest for gold. We expect not that gold and silver should seek us out ; if we do, our purses will be light and our hearts heavy ; and we may take up S. Peter's saying, 'Silver and gold have I none' (Acts iii. 6). It is true that without Christ we can do nothing ; but having Christ will we do nothing either? (2 Chronicles xv. 4 ; Jeremiah xxvi. 13 ; S. Luke xxii. 61, 62.)

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Repentance must be continuous. REPENTANCE is not a thing to be done once and then left alone ; but to be practised day by day as long as we live, especially in the dark night of affliction (Psalms vi. 6. Psalm li. 3).

THERE are some people who think that having once repented they need not repent again. This is as if a man thought that, having once shaved, his beard would never grow again, whereas it begins to grow as soon as the razor is off the face.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	GAL. IV. 21-31.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN VI. 1-14.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	GENESIS XLII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	GENESIS XLIII. OR GENESIS XLV.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Doing of the Truth.

Every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God. S. JOHN iii. 20, 21.



N Ash Wednesday, Christian people are accustomed to think earnestly together of the great reality of the moral darkness which encompasses the world. We should bring ourselves unto the presence of the great shadow of human sin, and see the imperative necessity for some escape into the light. But to-day Ash Wednesday is a thing of the past, with all the dismalness and suddenness with which it intrudes into the spring; and the tale of the week-days has been resumed. It is a symbol of the contrast between these great encompassing realities and the conduct of our ordinary life. When we pass into the street and watch the crowd as it passes by, we ask how many are there in whose heart of hearts there is a deep conviction of the seriousness of life, of the vastness of its issues, or of the reality of the opposing forces of light and darkness that contend for its allegiance. Nay, we come to ourselves: our very presence here, withdrawn for a moment from the bustle of the outward world, involving some degree of moral effort, yet in ourselves is there not a strange want of proportion between the vague sense that we have of the intense reality of our lives, and the vagueness and the thinness of the moral efforts which

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we make to mould our character. Our life is like a great open courtyard in which there is a crowd, a multitude of travellers, feeble aspirations and vague regrets jostling familiarly with sordid motives and petty faults, and the evil creeps within and takes its place among the crowd of travellers because there is no constant and vehement scrutiny at the gates, and the steward of our household, the inner self of ours, so seldom steps out with his authority to sift the crowd, but rather weakens it by his familiarity with all the travellers. And still more seldom does the steward of the household retire into the secret chamber where he meets the awkward questioner, the witness for the voice of God, the master of the household.

And often the result of this crowding the life with aimless trifles is a confusion of the moral issues. The evil which has crept in refuses to go out. We have given it the right to enter; it remains as a habit, it is at home and it becomes connected with other elements in our nature with which we cannot dispense, and so we have not the courage to bid it go. And thus the momentary shift becomes the abiding, besetting fault; the momentary indulgence becomes the favourite habit; and the simplest moral movements are made for each of us intensely difficult.

Or if we look beyond ourselves into the great world that is without, that world, for example, of commerce from which many of us have come for one day, what a chasm we see between the accepted practices of our commerce and the simpler morality of Jesus Christ, and we ask, who is to blame? There are no conspicuous offenders, but rather a multitude, a network of tendencies, in their combination almost irresistible, but which originated in shifts and tricks which at the time seemed almost innocent in their appearance. And thus between the New Testament and our ordinary practice there is that reason of complexity and difficulty in which it seems impossible to find secure moral footing. And the individual—what is he to do? It seems that nowhere can he see the clearness of light.

And yet the light is there. We believe it. Our presence here testifies to that belief. The light that can make all life simple and straight and strong—we believe it is revealed first of all in our consciences; could we but let conscience speak with sufficient decisiveness it would clear some *débris*, let in the light, and reveal some further line of duty. And behind that conscience there is, so we believe, the mastery of Jesus Christ, that once and for all the standard of the conscience of the world has been set by His perfect example. The light is come that lightens every man that cometh into the world.

And yet when we turn from this belief of ours in the reality of the light to the moral confusion in which our individual lives are set, we ask, why is it that it does not shine more clearly? It is our own

COMPLETE SERMON

fault—that is the answer; because we will not let it shine. The shining of this moral light of the world demands a willingness on our part to do what it shows. It can only reveal itself to a will that is set towards it. It must be so. God will give no gift of clear illumination at the cost of His greatest gift, and the freedom of our characters. And so we must come to the light, we must move with our wills towards it, and not only ask weakly that it should come to us and make things clear. The light does not shine with the clearness that we could wish because we turn from it. ‘He that doeth earthly things hateth the light’—the force of S. John’s words might rather thus be rendered. He who spends his activity in worthless trifles, never coming to any great decisions, never clearing his life by the facing of great responsibilities, he, by that very fact, averts his will from the light—he hates it.

And why? Let S. John give the answer that our conscience would give. ‘He cometh not to the light lest his works should be re-proved.’ Ah, it is an answer that strips off for all of us the sophistries of our moral indolence—for all of us, for those who follow simply the guiding of conscience, and for those, perhaps most of us, who do sometimes enjoy the vision of the Light of the world as He streams into our characters. But for all of us, the reason why we come not to the light is because it would mean the reproving of our deeds. We know what it would mean. We know that it would reveal our life in its true character. It would show the inherent worthlessness of much that we covet, or prize, or even secretly enjoy, or half shamefacedly keep within ourselves. It would involve the supreme revulsion, sacrifices we are not prepared to make, a dislocation, a revulsion of ordinary habit, which startles us when we know that it must come. And so we turn from the light. And that is the cause of the moral aimlessness and confusion of which we speak. We trace it to its cause, and that cause in the best of us is the want of moral courage.

Let us for a moment see the consequences of failure in this courage. If there is a disuse of the activity of the will, a failure again and again to bring ourselves to the test of great decisions, then there must follow the approbation of the conscience. How often we know the youth that is full of high aspirations, but clouded with the moral unwillingness to make a severe and earnest struggle, passing into the middle age, when over the soul there settles a quiet contentment with the life of compromise.

But passing from these to ourselves who humbly desire more truly and earnestly to follow the light of the world, is it not also so with us? We are unequal to the persistence of the severity of great moral efforts. We are afraid to turn the will once for all right round to the light. And so looking both to the darkness and to the light, we

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stumble, and fail alike in the career of worldliness and in the career of goodness, bringing neither fruit to perfection; weak, half-hearted sinning, followed by momentary emotions of regret and self-contempt, life never braced and stiffened by any one clear act of decisive courage whether for good or evil.

And so that is what produces the two results which mark most strongly our religious life: the one, the thinness and poverty of our character, our life so much a drift of compromise, full of minor inconsistencies which fritter away the effectiveness both of our example and of our character. Then the second result—the sadness, weariness of our religion. Ask yourselves the question, how little of the gladness, the brightness, the joyousness that might be ours if we were rejoicing in the light of life is the mark of our religion. What would be the effect in the world of religious men if they were less diffident, less downcast, less uncharitable because of the weakness of their own efforts, and realised there the meaning of being a company of men shouting like the sons of God for joy. Ah! we may be sure that the brightness and the gladness of religion can only come to us when we buy it and win it at the price of great moral self-surrender.

And so, lastly, with the longing for this brighter life let us look at the other side of the picture. 'He that doeth the truth cometh to the light.' 'Doeth the truth'—'worketh it out,' that is the real force of the words, the contrast between aimless activity and clear straightforward acting; 'doing out the truth,' the truth, that is, as it appears to each individual character. It will not be the same to all. God manifests His truth in different ways to different persons. There is, for example, the man who would not feel it honest to say that his constraining motive was a sense of personal loyalty to Jesus Christ, but rather a simple desire to be clean and straight and honest in thought and purpose. But to each of us there is one clear line of duty, simple, ready to hand, and that represents for us the truth of God. And so all we have to do is to act up to the truth honestly, fearlessly, consistently. We need not wait for the assurance that it is the will of God. We need not wait until we can make our own the fervent language of a convinced Christian faith. Nay. He that does the truth will come to the light. He that does the will of God will come to the knowledge of the pattern. For he whose moral character is so honest that God knows it belongs to the truth, he in God's own time must hear His voice.

There is many an emotional Christian whose keener imagination or warmer temperament enables him at times to understand the reality of prayer, or even to form some vision of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet who wanders aimlessly at the cross roads between the world and God, while the simpler, more honest, doubtful

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man starting far behind him and unrewarded on his course by devotion or by prayer, at least the prayer that is conscious of some one who hears it, passes him by and goes first into the kingdom. For him and for the more conscious Christian alike there is the one plain duty, the doing of the truth, unflinching faithfulness to the first demand of duty. For this is the meaning of S. John's words. In proportion as a man leans upon that conception of good or duty which God has revealed to him, so, in proportion as it lifts him out of himself, it purges and winnows his character, and he feels that something which has this purging effect upon him can be due to no source so shallow as his own human nature. He will recognise in it an appeal, a call from the eternal goodness. He will hear, because he is of the truth, the voice of God. The reality of his own devotion to goodness will beget in him an eager desire to spread the goodness into the lips of others and in the experience of the service of men, he will feel these needs of patience, of humility, of hopefulness. And when we think of it, these needs can be answered by nothing but by the conviction that in the service of man we are strengthened by a great alliance, by One who knows human nature through and through, and because He loves it, hopes in it boundlessly, and believes in it even when it seems most outcast. And so gradually he will come to know that the goodness which has sustained and inspired him is only revealed in its fulness in the human face of Jesus Christ. To him who loyally follows the light which he has there must be revealed that great light from which it was kindled, and in that light he sees the whole course of his life. The light shall make his works manifest that they have been wrought in God—wrought in God from first to last. All these desires and resolutions for a better and a fuller life have become to him the single sense of one divine presence in his nature, the separate words of one continuous call, the yearning of one all-encompassing love.

And so he comes with the light and walks with it, and in the light he sees light everywhere, and life becomes to him bright, and straight, and eager, and joyous, and full of love to God and man; and men as they see him feel that he has been with Jesus, and that the Light of the world is still shining upon the earth.

Ah, we say, would that we could come to the reality of such a life! But, the fulfilment of that life is in the hands of God. The first step which must be taken, and which, if taken, carries within it the perfect pledge of its fulfilment, that first step belongs to us. We think that as we are about to go forth from the stillness of a great cathedral to the alien, often seeming alien life we have to live outside, that that ideal is beyond us. But that pledge of perfect fulfilment just belongs to the outward life. There is to us

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some clear line of duty in which God reveals to us His truth. Let us take it to-morrow. Let us think of the means that we must use when these mid-day lights for the moment pass, and ask the Light of life to stream into our hearts and show us what that one line of duty is. And then, if we take it, the next line of duty will already have been made clear, and step by step that wonderful, attractive love of God will bring us forth into the light.

C. G. LANG.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

St. Paul's Allegory—Nature and the Supernatural

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

GALATIANS IV. 31.

I.  HE Jew has his 'covenant,' his dispensation, starting and dating from Sinai; from Mount Sinai, S. Paul stays to add (as making his illustration more appropriate), in Arabia and among 'the Hagarens': call that covenant Hagar: set it in the same 'row' or 'file' with Jerusalem that now is: see her 'gendering to bondage'—bearing her offspring into a condition of spiritual servitude and serfdom—the condition of all who trust in flesh, and refuse the true life and the true divinity of the Spirit. The Christian has his 'covenant,' and his seat and home is above. He is the child, not of flesh, but of spirit. He is born, not of flesh and blood, not of names and forms, but of a grace and a will and a power independent of, and sovereign over, all. Hence the enmity. Hence the discord in the tent of Abraham. Nature cries out against grace, regards it as an interference with creature-right and creature-dignity, despises, and 'mocks,' and (if occasion be given) 'persecutes'—must be ejected, at last, from the family and home of the free.

If this is the true account of the allegory, it seems to remove it from the region of fancy into that of principle. It makes the feud between nature and the supernatural the war of the ages. The one will keep God out of, the other will welcome God into, the world of His Creation, and the Church of his Election. And in this controversy between nature and the Supernatural lies the whole distance and difference, not only between the false and the true, not only between the temporary and the permanent, not only between defeat and victory, not only between death and life, but between these two

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opposites, first and above all, bondage and liberty, the spirit of the slave and the spirit of the free.

II. In S. Paul's days, this struggle was conspicuously between Judaism and the gospel. That struggle is ended, or survives only in a few languid encounters between a religion which has long ceased to proselytise, and a faith which has almost forgotten to evangelise. The real struggle now, as between bondage and freedom, is inside the tent, whether that tent, representative of the Patriarchal, be the tent of the Church or the tent of the man. And it is far more profitable to take the latter. It is cold and hungry work to be always suspecting Romanism and counterworking Ritualism in a congregation not predisposed assuredly to either. But to show, each man to himself, the insidious workings within of a spirit of bondage—for that which wins its way outwardly, and in visible forms of error, does so, we may be quite sure, because it has its roots deep in human nature, deep therefore in our own—this must be always profitable.

III. What has nature to say about the forgiveness of sins? See her crushing relentlessly, by the operation of law, physical, mental, civil, the soul, the life, that has sinned. See her sternly, obdurately, refusing mercy to the poor victim of lust or intemperance, who has sinned but once or twice, sinned in ignorance, sinned under persuasion, sinned (we might almost say) by accident or by destiny. Who can dare to say for certain, apart from Jesus Christ, that that severity, amounting almost to cruelty, amounting almost to injustice, with which nature punishes transgression, is not the whole of God's truth, and the whole of God's counsel?

Yet, unless you can believe in the forgiveness of sin, of your own sin—foul, black, hideous as you see it when you have once seen God, you must be in bondage, you must be a Hagar and an Ishmael inside the tabernacle. You will still be digging and burrowing among the decomposed relics, you will still be dreaming of averting and compensating and propitiating, by so many hours of kneeling, and so many sighs of compunction, and so many tears of satisfactory, of at last satisfactory, penitence: you can never arise and do God's work as one of God's 'mercied' ones—you can never bend low before His footstool with that manly and manful reverence which alone—and not its parody or its exaggeration—His soul loveth.

So it is also with the great sister revelation, the revelation, also from heaven, also by the lips of Him who descended—of the Holy Ghost, the Life and the Consecration. What has nature to tell of a restoration of the years that the locust and the cankerworm have eaten—of the giving back of powers forfeited and energies sinned away—of any interference, any whatever, with the regular law of cause and consequence operating in the moral constitution of

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the man once created? Let us determine, God helping us, that we will take Him back, however long we have repelled Him, into our lives and into our deaths. Let us not, after occupying the tent, find ourselves, in the dread day, wanderers in the desert. A gospel is nothing or else true—and, if true, it is nothing if it be not realised. If Christ revealed the forgiveness of sins, where are ours? Are they on His head or are they on our own? If Christ revealed the Holy Ghost, is He in us? Is He sought, cherished, relied upon, for daily work, daily war, daily strength, daily holiness?

DEAN VAUGHAN.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Fragments not to be wasted.

Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. S. JOHN vi. 12.

I. T is a great feature of the character of God, the union of the vastness of His liberality, with the minuteness of the accuracy of His economy. He 'provides you all things richly to enjoy,' but He looks to see what you do with 'the cup of cold water.' He is 'the Lord of hosts,' and 'His are the cattle upon a thousand hills,' but a 'sparrow cannot fall' without His observant eye, nor 'a hair' drop till He has counted it.

Every man's greatness is to grow like God. And that man, therefore, is the really great man, who combines the most large-hearted generosity with the extremest particularity about what men call trifles.

It was not accounted beneath the dignity of prophecy to say that God's foreknowledge had provided that 'a seamless coat' should not be 'torn.' And in the midst of the magnificence and the awe of the Resurrection, some angel's hand had pause to 'fold' and 'place' a 'napkin.'

It is not, therefore, without the highest warrant of the mind of God, and of the pattern of Christ, that I hold it to be a very part of my sacred function to say, to those who have the most, and because they have the most, of the good things of this world, 'Never waste.' You are in the great household of God, and in that household there is to be no waste. The veriest scrap of food, or clothes, or property of any kind, has its proper use. If you do not want it, another does. Be careful to turn it to account. Because you have sat down to the rich banquet which God has spread for you, and because more has been poured into your lap than you can consume yourself, it is no

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justification for the bits that are lost. They are some one's, though you despise them. Therefore 'gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.'

II. But the rule applies to much more than those things which can be measured by money. Consider, for a moment, what the real value is of the crumbs of truth; what one of those better feelings and convictions cost, of which you had so many, what was paid for one of those promises, or those means of grace, or those privileges—which have been showered upon you!

We can well understand what a preciousness would attach to all those relics of the feast on the shore of the lake of Galilee, in the consideration of the miracle which had produced them, and the hand which had wrought the miracle. Surely they were no common morsels.

And is that common, should that be held cheap, for which that greatest of all miracles was done, the miracle of the death of the Son of God? Have you not been fed at the cost of the blood of Christ? And every—the least—mercy, hope, joy, your soul has tasted, was not it weighed in the balances with the infinite Godhead of Jesus Christ? And is not the whole love of God, and the perfect work of Jesus in it?

Then who can exaggerate the caution and the jealousy with which we should secure that no part of the grace of God should perish?

Shall I collect studiously the very grains of the dust of the gold which falls at my feet, and shall I not more exactly and more sacredly still gather up 'the fragments that remain' of God's word?

III. Let us never forget that the true nourishment and life of every man is the Lord Jesus Christ. In this, the great reality far exceeds the type of the miracle. For to us, Christ is not only the gathered bread, but Himself, His own Body and His own Blood, the very food itself which He gives, and by which souls live. For this end He was broken, that we might feed on Him.

And how little we get, and how much have we lost, of the Christ which has been offered for us! Many a precious thing of Christ has passed before your view, and been, as it were, in your hands, which has never entered into your heart, and mingled with your life's blood. Be busy in 'gathering up' the beauties of Jesus, the glories of Jesus, the love of Jesus. For now is your harvest-time of Jesus; and a day may come when one 'fragment' of Jesus will be more to you than ten thousand worlds.

In the great exodus, you must be able to 'eat the lamb whole. Therefore, go about on every field of memory, and of imagination, and of thought, and of reason, and of love, and 'gather up' the sweet 'fragments' of Jesus, that 'nothing be lost.'

J. VAUGHAN.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Secret Life and the Outward.

And he entered into his chamber, and wept there : and he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself. GENESIS xliii. 30, 31.

I.  HE trouble of Joseph on the occasion spoken of in the text was one of the heart or affections. There was a beloved brother before him, whom he had not seen for many years, and to whom he could not yet unbosom himself with the full warmth of natural feeling. The pent-up love was overwhelming ; it could only be relieved by a burst of tears : he sought where to weep ; he entered into his chamber and wept there. How many of us can feel with him ! Where is the house in which affection is not the source of some secret trouble ?

Unrequited love, undivulged anxiety, furnish examples of secret sorrow : another may be taken not from the heart but from the soul : and we must think of those distresses which come to us from the inward strivings of sin ; from those restless workings of inward corruption, which make the life of so many one long toil and conflict. These too, these above all, are secret things. I speak not of sin yielded to and indulged : in this there may be little weeping in the chamber, and little refraining of one's-self below. But between the total slavery of sin and the perfect freedom of holiness there lie many long and dubious stages ; between the dead sleep of natural indifference and the entire wakefulness of Christian maturity. All through that intermediate region the saying of the text may be realised in a thousand ways and degrees. More and more in proportion to the advance once made in the life of God, and to the extent of a subsequent declension from it. More and more in proportion to the keenness of the spiritual insight, and to the feebleness of the obeying will. More and more in proportion as conscience is strong and resolution weak ; the sense of duty accurate, and the habit of self-government loose and intermittent. In such cases, the chamber may well be a scene of weeping, though the life below and the life abroad may bear few traces of it. The sad condemning retrospect of sinful indulgence, even if that indulgence has been but in heart, and has not actually stained the life afresh with sin ; those 'bitter thoughts of conscience born' which 'with sinners wake at morn ;' the plain direction of duty, yet the

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experience alike and foresight of departure from it; these things recurring every day are enough to make life very wretched; most of all—the point now before us—do they account for much discomfort and much agony in that secret communion with God, which (strange though it may appear, yet with a truth beyond gainsaying) may still be maintained in some sense even by the unstruggling or scarcely struggling combatant.

II. Let us hear the brief conclusion of the subject. It will have two parts.

1. To some—to those who need the caution—I would say, Do not nurse your secret sorrows. They are not fancies in themselves, but they may be made fanciful. Sorrows of affection grow by pondering. They are loud calls to work. If this world cannot be what you would have it in enjoyment, take care at all events not to miss its object. It was never given to you to rest in: that belongs to a different life; a life, moreover, which you will miss altogether if you do not apprehend the object of this life. Your griefs will not be allayed, they will be fostered by hugging them to your bosom. Make up your mind, by stern resolution, that this is evidently not to be a world of rest to you, whatever it may be to others. Then carry your sorrows out: take them with you to the house of God; perhaps you will leave them there: take them with you to the abodes of poverty, of sickness, of misery; there you will be ashamed of them; there you will be half inclined to call them fancies, when you look upon those palpable hideous forms which are buffeting and torturing the mortal life of others. Those people who are in the hands of want, of disease, of vice, of cruelty, have no time to think of sorrows of sentiment or of the heart: learn a lesson from them: it will alleviate if it cannot cure your griefs.

2. Finally, to stronger men, who have no such experiences of secret sorrow, whatever its cause and source, I would say, Beware of disregarding and despising those who have. Make room for others—make room even for the weak, the fanciful, or the morbid—in this capacious world of ours. Live, and let live. Be tolerant, for Christ's sake, of moral feebleness. Be gentle, for Christ's sake, to the erring and the sinful. This is general. But, in particular, the subject on which we have dwelt says to you, and to all, Recognise the existence of secret sorrows as an explanation of many phenomena of character. Jesus Christ bore our griefs and carried our sorrows: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Uses of Suffering.

But He for our profit. HEBREWS xii. 10.



S preliminary to the whole subject, I would take the large and comprehensive view : ‘Whence is suffering? Why is this a suffering world at all?’

The answer is wide and deep ; and I would only now go a very little way into it, and say two things. First, God willed to make a probationary world ; and, that it might be probationary, there must be suffering. But why probationary? Because the greatest end for which this earth was created was for the exhibition of Jesus Christ upon it. Therefore the fall ; therefore the suffering,—to give occasion to the manifestation of the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity.

Secondly, God had in His mind, from the first, something better than the Garden of Eden for man. Therefore we fell in the first Adam, because we were destined to rise higher in the second : and suffering,—our suffering and His suffering—was the way. It could never have been but for suffering. And, as much as heaven is better than paradise, so much have we to thank God that Adam sinned, and that suffering came into this world, seeing it rests with us to be happier, infinitely happier, because of the ‘suffering for a season’: and we can write it upon the entrance of evil upon this earth, and upon all the misery which it entailed, ‘He did it for our profit.’

But, leaving this large range, let us consider ‘the uses of suffering,’ in its more personal application.

As a general rule, it is better to look on suffering rather as chastisement than as punishment. ‘Punishment,’ as applied to the troubles of God’s children, is not a word ever used by David, or by Solomon, or by Christ, or by His Apostles ; ‘chastisement’ often. David was very fond of the expression. The reason of the distinction is twofold. Punishment is magisterial ; chastisement is paternal. Punishment is rather retrospective ; chastisement prospective. And I may add, that punishment is generally for the sake of others ; chastisement for the sufferer’s sake.

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It is true, indeed, that we have the highest authority for saying that afflictions are so far punishments, that they are the consequences—generally the very exact and most accurate consequences—of the sins we have done; and that when we suffer, ‘we are chastened of the Lord’—in lieu of future evil—‘that we may not be condemned with the world.’

Still, you will always be safe to regard your suffering rather prospectively than retrospectively.

Do this. Take one or two deliberate, solemn views back at your sins. Bring them to the front. Carry them to Christ. Lay them believingly, trustingly, on Him. Believe, and do not doubt, that they are washed out in His blood. And then leave them. Get away out of the past. Be at leisure to consider the future: to think, ‘To what account has been my suffering? What have been its issues? How does God mean it to be profitable to me?’

But, to use anything, it is necessary first to hold it well in hand, to grasp and know it. Do this with your trouble. Be sure that you define correctly what your trouble is. Take it out of all its mysteries. Do not exaggerate it. Do not disparage it. As S. Paul says: Neither despise it, nor faint under it. But face it. Watch its nature. How much is physical? How much is mental? For what am I responsible? Some such definition as this is essential before you can really deal with trouble; and a trial is often so obscure and mistakable, that it is very important to pray that God will enable you to see exactly what it is.

It is a great mistake, and one which deceives many, to suppose that suffering will, of itself, be any use. Suffering is never negative. But it often hardens. And suffering turned to no account, or turned to a bad account, is the most grievous of sins! I know no words so severe in the whole Bible as those which are said of King Ahaz: ‘In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that King Ahaz.’

There must be a supernatural agency working with the suffering before it will be of any use to the sufferer. The Holy Ghost must do His own work in the soul.

Therefore, at the very threshold, ask two things: one, that the God of grace will work with the God of providence, to make the trial effective to spiritual ends; and the other, that whatever be the special purpose for which the trial is sent, it may not pass away till you have learned your lesson, and the purpose is fulfilled.

This done, we may look for the uses.

Now, all suffering, of every kind, is intended, partly, to be to the mind just what physical pain is to the body. When you feel a pain in any part of your body, it is sent for this purpose, to say to you,

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‘There is mischief going on here; attend to it.’ Pain is always a warning note, an index to the spot where danger lies.

It is the same to the soul, with every suffering which our Heavenly Father ever sends us. It comes to say, ‘There is something which needs correction.’ There is something latent. But you must probe it, and examine it, and treat it seriously. The Holy Ghost, working in your conscience, will show you what it is. For we almost always go into our afflictions in much the same state as the three men went into ‘the burning fiery furnace’: we go in bound; ‘bound’ with some chain of worldliness, or selfishness, or a wrong affection, or a sin. The affliction is to do to us just what the fire did to ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego,’—it is to burn, not us, but our fetters, and to set us free. And it will assuredly be so with us, if only the Son of God walk with us in the furnace. But woe to us, if we come out with our chains on!

Or, take the same image of fire; the suffering is to get rid of the dross. It is probable that there was a time in your life when your heart was in a much better state than at that period when your trial came upon you. But, by various influences, ‘the silver has become dross, and the fine gold dim!’ The suffering was to get rid of the alloy. ‘I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.’ And generally the heat of the fire is in proportion to the result that is to be produced: ‘The fining pot for silver, but the furnace for gold.’

And this is not all which the burning is to do. It is to soften, so that that iron heart of yours may become more malleable to take the shape and to receive the impression that God would give it. Therefore, all those seasons of depression; therefore, all those burstings of grief; therefore, all those cold thrills of hot pain, to make you first ‘a vessel of grace, fit for the Master’s use’; then, an instrument to His praise: and then, beyond and above both, to stamp you with His own name, and His own image.

And now, more in detail. Sufferings are not always intended for the same uses. For instance. The suffering of Manasseh was for conversion; the suffering of Job was for humiliation; the suffering of David was for restoration; the suffering of S. Paul was for experience; the suffering of Christ, from a human point of view, was for sympathy and pattern.

And yet, most strictly speaking, perhaps, it would be wrong to say that suffering ever actually converts. It softens the heart for holy things; it leads a man to read his Bible; it drives him to prayer; but we make great mistakes about the exact point of conversion. Who can say, of vegetable life, or of human life, or of divine life, the precise moment of birth? When was S. Peter’s? When was S. Paul’s?

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At the gate, or inside the city ? But this I assert, that there are very few conversions that ever take place, and probably never a maturity of the Christian life, without suffering.

Every suffering, or sorrow, may be regarded as a chapter in the little book of life, which is preparatory to another chapter which we are to read presently.

Thus the chapter of trial is often preparatory, as it was with Job, or with David under the persecutions of Saul, or Israel in the desert, to a chapter of greatness and prosperity. It humbles us, and makes us capable of exaltation.

Or, a chapter of trial is preparatory, as it was with Moses, and S. Paul in Arabia, by much discipline, to a chapter of some great special work.

Or, as with S. Peter's tears, preparatory to sympathy, and strengthening of others' hearts.

But 'the uses of suffering' to the sufferer are both direct and indirect. Direct, as they come to him straight from God ; indirect, as they come back to him retributively through those to whom his sufferings are useful.

And here is a comfortable thought, that whether he is conscious of it, or not, every sufferer in the world is a benefactor, for he enlists and evokes the kindnesses and the love and the ministrations of those about him, and so he brings them into a beatitude : 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy.'

There is one more view which we must never leave out. All life is a foil—a foil to make heaven the happier and the more beautiful when it comes.

Therefore, the toil now, to enhance the rest ; therefore, the battle now, to enhance the victory ; therefore, the solitude now, to enhance the fellowships ; therefore, the separations now, to enhance the meetings ; therefore, the disappointments now, to enhance the satisfactions ; therefore, the darkness now, to enhance the daylight ; therefore, the crampings of time now, to enhance the liberty of the large room, where there is space for everything ; and therefore, all the sufferings now, to enhance the wondrous amenities of that tearless and painless world, where the contrast will well repay the shadow, and justify the mystery, in a land where one moment will compensate a life-long agony !

He only looks at life rightly, who always views it as education for eternity. This is infancy ; that is maturity. This is discipline ; that is perfectness. This is the lesson ; that is knowledge. This is the school ; that is home.

And it is well for those whose home lies so far away, that when they would set their foot too firmly on any spot of earth, there is something, some disappointment, some pain, to make them fain to spread their

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wings again, and hear a voice which says, 'Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest; because it is polluted!'

And remember, we have, each of us, our own appointed, destined measure. It cannot be more; and it must not be less. It is a fixed line. The measure is 'the sufferings of Christ'; so that of every suffering life you may say, if you are bearing it for His sake, 'I am filling up that which is behind,' that is, that which is still lacking, 'of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh.' And when it is complete, then, 'as I have been conformed to the likeness of His death, I shall be also to the likeness of His resurrection.'

And it is a wonderful and most comforting thought, for every sufferer in the school of Christ: My Master was chastened for His profit; and He, even He, 'the Captain of my salvation,' was 'perfect through suffering.'

J. VAUGHAN.

The Elder to the Elect Lady.

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 2 S. JOHN 8.

IT is in the manner of S. John to speak of himself otherwise than by name. In his gospel, when he has occasion to speak of himself, it is as the disciple whom Jesus loved; that other disciple; the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things. In his first epistle there is no mention of the name of the writer. Here he describes himself as the elder; just as S. Peter, in his first epistle, says, 'The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ. It was a lower title than his highest of all; but, in a mixed sense, as denoting partly his actual age, and partly his general ministerial character, by no means inappropriate even to an Apostle, and carrying with it a peculiar force, of humility and of tenderness, which perhaps no other title could have conveyed.

I. Remark, in passing, first of all, that this letter is addressed to a Christian woman.

In Christ Jesus, S. Paul said, there is neither male nor female. Men and women alike share in the help and hope of the gospel. What pains did Christ Himself take, upon earth, to show that this was His purpose! He disdained not to be found by His disciples talking with a woman; bringing her to the knowledge of herself, and so to the knowledge of Him. Some of His most consolatory words on earth, some of His most wonderful acts on earth, were addressed to, or done for, women. Upon the Cross, His last earthly thought was for a woman: 'Behold thy mother.' And, although the ordinary

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language of a mixed congregation, whether as addressed by its minister, or in its own addresses to God, must necessarily be, in outward form, suggestive of the idea of a congregation of men, yet it is wisely ordered that one portion of the daily service should be borrowed from the words of a woman—‘He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden’—and that which is always implied should thus sometimes be expressed, that a Christian woman is as honourable in the sight of God as a Christian man; her wants, no less than his, cared for; her anxieties shared, her sorrows borne, her sins forgiven, her services accepted, by the common Creator and Redeemer and Sanctifier of the whole race of man.

II. Again, we learn from this letter what vital error is.

We have often had occasion to remark how great a readiness there is in our days to make men offenders for a word. It adds much to the difficulties of a Christian teacher, that he has to be so constantly on his guard against perverse as well as reasonable misapprehensions of his statements of doctrine. We may be a little more charitable than we are, without any risk of injury to the cause of truth. Let us hold fast that which is true, but let us also hope something with regard to persons who on minor points may be in error.

III. Not wholly unconnected with this is another remark suggested by this second epistle of S. John, as to the simplicity of the Christian life. ‘This is love, that we walk after His commandments: this is the commandment, that, as ye heard from the beginning, ye shall walk in it.’

Some of us are always on the look-out for ‘new commandments’; fancying that, unless they do this or that, they cannot be Christians; distracting themselves with questions of difficult duty, or inventing for themselves novel and untried methods of service. S. John’s advice is very different. He says to us, You all know what is right. Love to God, and love to man, these are the old commandments, and these also are the new commandments: there are none other.

IV. There is a fourth point suggested throughout the Epistle, and more especially by the verse read as the text: the constant danger of drawing back. ‘Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.’

Look to yourselves: there is danger, then. Those things which we have wrought; that is, the exertions of past days and years in the Christian life. That ye lose not these: that if we turn away, or turn aside, from Christ at last, all that has gone before will be vitiated and destroyed. The gospel gives us earnest caution to be ever looking well to ourselves, lest by going back from Christ after walking with Him, we should lose even those things which have been wrought for Him, and miss the attainment of our full reward.

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V. I add a fifth and last observation upon the epistle before us, that it shows us what Christ Himself is in the Christian scheme. 'He that abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God: he that abideth in that teaching hath both the Son and the Father.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Pilate and Popularity.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. S. MATT. xxvii. 24.

I. FROM the story of Pilate we learn the misery and danger that must sooner or later result from that all too common form of idolatry, self-worship. For many bold excuses are made for it by those who practise it. 'One must guard one's interests, you know.' 'If I do not look after myself, the world will not do it for me.' 'Charity begins at home.' 'I take care of myself, and I have no quarrel with those who act in the same way.'

Yes, and when all is said and done, the man who adopts this line of thought and action, and follows it out to its logical conclusion, degenerates into that miserable specimen, the selfish person, the self-pleaser, self-worshipper. Sometimes he becomes a coward, sometimes a tyrant, sometimes a betrayer, sometimes a criminal. In any case, one who cares not what misery he brings on others so long as he himself is safe, or as long as he is not worried, or can indulge in his desires.

II. There is small hope for some of us till the altar of self is completely overthrown. There is no knowing where self-worship may lead us. It certainly does lead, sometimes, as in Pilate's case, to a thirst for popularity. No one desires to be unpopular. It is only natural that we should wish to stand well with our friends. But when we read a 'must' into the case, the matter is entirely altered. This is what some do. This is many a man's ruin. He would not be vicious, or profane, or drink, or gamble, or swear, only 'it is the thing'! If he does not do these things, his popularity is gone!

III. One thought more. Look at Pilate washing his hands. Listen to his words: 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person.' Innocent! The judge who gives up the Saviour to his murderers an innocent man? Innocent? Is blood-guiltiness to be washed off thus with a little water?

It is idle to protest against sin and yet take our share in it, saying that our holding aloof will not make others refrain, and that, so long as we put in a strong protest, we are not guilty, but innocent.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Remember that while one man may tempt you, not one thousand men, with all the devils to help them, can, against your will, make you sin !

J. B. C. MURPHY.

Living unto Christ.

For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.
2 CORINTHIANS V. 14, 15.

LET us now consider this special demand which Lent brings so closely before us, not to live unto ourselves, but unto Christ. You know well, that in the world it is considered an exaggerated, enthusiastic, and visionary demand, which, looked at more closely, vanishes like a phantom ; and we will attempt to overcome this prejudice at least. We will try to make it clear to ourselves in two ways : first, that it is perfectly just ; and then, that it is truly reasonable.

I. On the first point we ought to need no extensive explanation. It ought to be a very apparent truth for men in general, and for the Christian especially, that, as there is a Christ, it should be the only natural, right, and just thing to live not unto ourselves, but unto Christ. Nothing can be more just, or more natural ; and the Apostle expresses it thus : ‘The love of Christ constraineth us.’ So long as there is a Christ, so long this word holds good : Love for love. It is then quite natural that we should love Him. How did He then live ? For us, to the last drop of His blood ; for us in love, not for Himself, but to help us, ‘to make us free from the one great evil, from sin with all its consequences, from the bonds of death ; for that reason alone He lived in love until death. He who has but a faint impression of this, must acknowledge that it is just to dedicate our whole life unconditionally to Him. He who knows the love of Christ, in all its greatness, and all the greatness of the benefit which lay in His life and death, can say no less than the Apostle : ‘The love of Christ constraineth me : I live no more, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.’

Let us ask ourselves, what is it to live unto ourselves ? Who are we, then ? What is our own self ? Alas, the natural, sensuous self is a sinful creature, and therefore perverted towards itself, and selfish. Let it once live to itself. Will this bring happiness ? Only apparently.

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Well, then, let it satisfy its selfish needs, live for itself, treat everything else as a means for its own ends, push all others away because they make shadows for it, place itself upon itself; what will then remain? The sensuous consumes and devours itself in a short time, and the heart, which cannot do without love, finds itself alone, and the ties are loosened which before united us to others; the poorer the existence has been in itself, the poorer is the world now to it. And is that what is called living to one's self? Is that giving the distinctive character its full rights? No, a man's distinctive characteristics cannot be unfolded thus; but only in the life of love, only when we, with our peculiar characteristics, enter into the characteristics of others—only by this do they become powerful, living, worthy characteristics of a man, and a glass in which the characteristics of others are shown with special clearness. To live unto ourselves signifies to produce something true, right, and good of ourselves, it does not mean to consume ourselves. such a life is death. How many have experienced that too late, and longed after a higher and better life, to which they might devote themselves!

II. If we have been forced to recognise this claim as just, the other question still remains to us, which perhaps establishes a nearer claim on our own hearts. However just it may be, it will be said, it is not at all clear and distinct; it is a visionary, untenable claim; one can see nothing definite in it; therefore he who assents to it cannot carry it out. We will not deny that much of this appears well-grounded. There are people who think that they live to Christ, and in whom we cannot see in what their life in Christ really consists, with whom we see nothing but abundance of phrases, words, unintelligible words, but nothing more, and perhaps even practices which must be a matter of indifference to the Lord Christ, of which He would not say that they were His life, but merely empty, mechanical practices, which certainly do not bring life to a higher stage.

Is it not simple so to live, that we, by our whole life in word and deed, should bear witness to the Christ, in whom the God of love was manifested? that we should at all times so act that our faith in His holy love, as in that which is most certain and true, should be evident, and thus be a witness for all? And is it not a thing simple and intelligible, that we should show this consciousness in all our words and deeds? It is difficult, infinitely difficult, but simple. It is the highest and greatest; and let no one say, he can think nothing of such a life, which serves the purposes of the Lord, to reveal the Father, and unite all to a kingdom of holy charity, that they might serve this with the surrender of all their powers and with all their soul. But it is not of the difficulty of the matter of which we have to speak; it is of the prejudice that it is a vain fancy, and this

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causes us to stop and reflect, in this season of Lent, that this claim is a just one, is a reasonable one, as we must acknowledge, the consideration of which should lead us to the question, How may we follow it? He who expects us to live unto Him alone, has also the power to make us live to Him, and make us new creatures. We cannot do it of ourselves; but this we can do: cling to Him with a heart full of confidence, never doubting that if we ask Him to give us a new life, He will give us more than we ask or comprehend.

R. ROTHE.

The Power of the Dog.

(Children's Sermon.)

Deliver . . . my darling from the power of the dog. PSALM xxii. 20.

THE Bible does not generally speak well of dogs. The word dog in the Scriptures often means a wicked person. It has that meaning in my text. David is speaking in this Twenty-second Psalm as a prophet, and he foretells the sufferings of our Saviour. When he says, 'Deliver my darling from the power of the dog,' it is a prayer that God would deliver His only Son from the hands of wicked men. In Eastern countries dogs are reckoned as unclean animals, and there if you want to give a man a bad name you call him a dog. But there are good dogs and bad dogs, dogs to be trusted and dogs to be avoided.

What ought we specially to think about in Lent? About our Lord's Fasting and Temptation. Yes, but there is something more for us to think of—our own sins and temptations, and how to conquer them. That is what I mean when I tell you there are several bad dogs of which we must beware. Let us think of some of their names.

I. First of all there is a dog called Sulky. No one can be happy with a sulky person, and no one is more unhappy than the sulky one himself.

II. Then there is another dog called Passion. Beware then of that fierce dog Passion. Remember what Solomon the wise man says about anger. I wonder if you could tell me the text? 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'

III. There is another dog of which you must beware. He is called Idle. You never see this dog doing anything useful. You never find him carrying a basket or a bundle, as some good dogs will. You never see him keeping guard over his master's goods, or minding the sheep, or drawing a sledge, like the clever dogs at the North

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Pole. He lies in the sun sleeping, almost too lazy to get up and eat his food. Perhaps you think this dog Idle does not do any harm. But what good does he do? People who never do any good are sure to do some harm. Take care, children, not to be bitten by dog Idle.

The old Greek fable says, that once a wagoner was driving a loaded wagon along a muddy lane, and the wheels stuck fast. Then the man prayed the strong Hercules to come and help him. But Hercules told him to put his shoulder to the wheel, if he wanted help. Remember that we must help ourselves. We must, as the Spanish proverb puts it—

‘Pray to God devoutly,
Hammer away stoutly.’

IV. There is another dog called Mischief, which is very dangerous. You must not think that I am speaking of Fun and Merriment—they are good dogs, which skip and play about, and do good, not harm. But Mischief is sly and secret, he goes about in dark places, and is never safe to meddle with. When a child is bitten by dog Mischief no one can tell what harm he may do.

V. There is another dog of which you must beware. His name is Careless. He is not so bad as some dogs, at times we can scarcely help liking him, and yet he does much harm. A child, after he has been bitten by dog Careless, says his prayers without thinking what they mean, and reads the Bible without understanding it. When he says his collect in Sunday-school, he leaves out the chief sentence, and makes a beautiful prayer sound like nonsense. Be on your guard against dog Careless.

H. J. WILMOT BUXTON.

The Tears of Remorse.

He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

HEBREWS xii. 97.

ALL tears, whether they are shed for joy or sorrow, for love or hate, for evil or for good, all tears speak earnestness. Therefore that language of tears we may well leave, and go on to tears of remorse—remorse, that deep and bitterest of all human grief! that element of hell! that dark and bad pretence, which simulates penitence, and is its opposite! the creation of Satan, always ‘clothing itself as an angel of light’! We must treat it with the greatest discrimination.

The examples of remorse which God has set up for us in the Bible

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from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation'; S. Paul, glorying in his 'thorn in the flesh'; Paul and Silas singing in their midnight prison; John, at Patmos; hundreds of martyrs and confessors, sleeping sweetly in their cells, on the eve of execution, calmly meeting the lions, exulting at the stake; and many, like Luther, in the Castle of Wartburg; or John Bunyan, penning that renowned book in Bedford Gaol; or Rutherford writing those sweet 'Letters' at Aberdeen; or Madame Guyon, making sweet poesy in the Bastile; or Bishop Beveridge, in the very passage of death, saying, 'If this be dying, would that we could die for ever!' and many whom I myself have seen, far happier in sorrow, sickness, and dark hours than ever I saw them in their days of health and merriment: the truth is indisputable, in the experience of all ages, there have been more who have joyed in the sevenfold fire than on the mount of transfiguration.

I must again venture to make this distinction, that 'the joy of suffering' comes most at the time, the peace afterwards. The reason resolves itself into this: in this world, there is always novelty in joy: it is of the nature of surprise. 'How wonderful! how very wonderful that I should be so sustained, so visited, so comforted, so gladdened, at such a time, and in such a dispensation as this!' And that very discovery marvels the joy. It will be subdued presently; and then the peace, which is always latent, but always better than the joy, the peace will come by-and-bye.

But let me examine some of the constituents which go to form the joy of Christian suffering.

The first thing which suggests itself to the mind—why times of suffering should be also times of joy—is sovereignty. For God loves to show His power and inscrutability by 'crossing the hands' of our expectation, by doing that which we all thought, if not absolutely impossible, yet very improbable. Hence may be the solution of the riddle: that pleasant things do not give pleasure; and unhappy times are not unhappy but, strangely, the happiest passages of life; and the most unfavourable conditions are more favourable than those which looked the sunniest.

It is simply, 'God is not man,' and 'His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.' And 'He works after the counsel of His own will, and none can say, What doest Thou?'

And the Sovereign is the Father. For, just as we sometimes have treasures, which we reserve for our children, and which we unlock and open for them only when they are sick, or in some particular trouble, so does our Heavenly Father act with us. And in seasons of special need and sorrow, He has very pleasant things which we never saw or

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guessed in our brighter hours: thoughts, promises, secret communications, tokens of love and remembrance, kept back designedly; in His wise and just and loving economy, for this very purpose, for that very time.

And then when God opens our minds to see it, every suffering is an argument of confidence and happiness. Is it not part of the promise? See how S. Peter weaves it into the blessing: 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' It is the landmark of the way, as S. Paul pointed out to the Churches in Asia Minor. 'We must through,'—that is the path,—'we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.'

And it is the badge of fellowship with the whole family of God. 'For the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren which are in the world.' And it is the sequence of all the saints in heaven: For these 'all came out of great tribulation.' And it is the token of sonship: 'For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?' And it is the likeness of Him, the Great Sufferer of us all, when we humbly, at our immense distance, walk after Him, copy His wounds, bear His marks, drink His cup, share His grave, are 'planted with Him in the likeness of His death.'

Just put all these thoughts together, and is not there sunshine enough there, laid on the dark drops, to make a rainbow? and is not there background enough to reflect sorrow into love, and suffering into joy?

But we have not yet reached (as I conceive) the core of the deepness of the joy which is in Christian suffering.

We are to believe that while God is everywhere, and fills all things, His special presence is granted to us at particular times, and under exceptional circumstances.

And when I speak of 'special presence,' it means two things. It means that God is there with singular love and favour to help and bless us, and it means, with all the power of the Holy Ghost, that presence is then more than at other times felt—a felt Presence.

Now, that emphatic presence is exceptionally promised to seasons of difficulty and dangerous distress. It sleeps till the storm comes. I do not find it ever coming in our times of ease and brightness; but always in trouble. 'Fear not! I am with thee.' 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' 'It is I! be not afraid.' 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.'

J. VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Mid-Lent Sunday.

THIS is Mid-Lent Sunday, anciently Lætare, or 'Refreshment Sunday.' The Introit this day was 'Lætare Hierusalem' from Isaiah lxvi. and Psalms cxxi., and thence the name popularly given to the Sunday. In some parts of England it was 'Mothering Sunday' or 'Braget' Sunday.

In the Mediæval Calendars it is Dominica de Panibus, from the Gospel of the miraculous feeding of the Five Thousand with loaves, which was (and is) read on this day.

The first lesson for evensong narrates the joyful reunion of Joseph with his kindred after long years of separation, and harmonises also with the general subject of the services.

I. The story of Joseph (Genesis xliii. 23). First evening lesson.

The various trials which Joseph underwent.

First, he was the object of his father's great affection, because he was the son of his old age. Philo notes that parents very frequently regard with especial affection children born to them in old age, and sons above others.

There were four causes why Joseph was hated by his brothers.

First, because he was more loved by his father.

Second, because he had brought unto him the report of their evil doings.

Third, his dreams, which foreshewed his being exalted above them.

Fourth, his constantly wearing before their eyes the coat of many colours given by his father. By this coat of many colours was signified that he excelled his brothers in many virtues.

II. Allegorically, Joseph is Christ, who being innocent, was delivered up by the Jews, was shut into the prison of death, but among the dead was made free by the power of God the Father, and received power and authority over the grave, and all who were bound there.

Consider now that true Hebrew, Christ, who was the revealer, not of a dream, but of the truth, and the vision of beauty, heaven, who in the fulness of His divinity, in the richness of heavenly grace, had come unto this prison of the body; whom the allurements of this present world were not able to attract: afterwards being seized by the impure hand of the synagogue, by His vest, that is, His body, put off His flesh, and, free from death, ascended into heaven.

In Joseph humility precedes glory. 'He who humbleth himself shall be exalted' (S. Matthew xxiii. 12). After clouds rises the sun, and after the shadows comes light.

S. J. EALES.

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VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Law. WE are the creatures of birth, of ancestry, of circumstance; we are surrounded by law, physical and psychical, and the physical very often dominates and rules the soul. As the chemist, the navigator, the naturalist attain their ends by means of law, which is beyond their power to alter, which they cannot change, but with which they can work in harmony, and by so doing produce definite results, so may we.

By the working of the law of the Spirit we may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit—very definite results—and in the end become partakers of the divine nature.

Law and Gospel. THE Law is that which lays down what a man is to do; the gospel reveals whence man is to obtain it. . . .
GAL. iv. 21. When I place myself in the hands of the physicians, one branch of art says where the disease lies, another, what course to take to get quit of it. So here, the law discovers our disease, the gospel supplies the remedy.

Judaism and Christianity. JUDAISM was the education of the spiritual child, Christianity that of the spiritual man. You teach a child by rules; his duty is obedience. But a man who is governed by maxims and rules, is a pedant or a slave; he will never be able to depart from the letter of the rule, nor even preserve the spirit of it. The Law lays down rules—‘Do this, and live.’ The Gospel lays down principles. Judaism said, ‘Forgive seven times’—exactly so much; Christianity says, Forgiveness is a boundless spirit—not three times, nor seven. No rule can be laid down but an infinite one—seventy times seven.

The Bond and the Free. Two classes of godly people: the bond and the free= slaves and sons.
GAL. iv. 31.

Characteristic of the Bond. THEY know not God as Father, but as hard master. ‘Wherewith shall I come before Thee,’ etc.
GAL. iv. 31. Nor Jesus Christ as Emancipator, Deliverer = ‘O wretched man that I am,’ ‘If the Son shall make you free.’ Hence they go in fear all their life, subject to bondage.

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Nor the Holy Ghost as Comforter, dwelling in His temple witnessing within. 'For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

Hence they are slaves, and their proper home is Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage ; and their religion is Judaism, not Christianity.

Characteristics LIBERATED, delivered, emancipated from bondage and of the Free. fear, they are 'free indeed.' The truth has set them
GAL. iv. 31. free. Their sins are forgiven ; the Holy Spirit is a

witness thereto. This they know. Their condition='glorious liberty of sons.' This they have to contend for: 'Be not again entangled in the yoke of bondage'; 'Stand fast in the liberty where-with Christ has made us free'; 'Ye have been called unto liberty.' They have a filial spirit: 'God hath not given them the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.'

S. Paul's illustration of both parties. The tent of Abraham held both. Compare the characters of Hagar and Ishmael with Sarah and Isaac.

Hagar is a slave in that household ; her son, too, is such, and has no rights ; whilst Sarah is a free woman, and her son is a child having family rights.

This quarrel in Abraham's tent is an Old Testament picture of a New Testament thing :

(i.) Hagar=covenant of Sinai=the bondage state.

(ii.) Sarah=new covenant=state of liberty.

(iii.) Ishmael, birth being natural (nature), is no heir to the kingdom of heaven.

(iv.) Isaac, birth being supernatural (and of promise), is a rightful heir, and teaches the necessity of a new birth.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,		HEB. IX. 11-15.
GOSPEL,		S. JOHN VIII. 46-59.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,		EXODUS III.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,		EXODUS V. or EXODUS VI. 1-14.
SECOND LESSONS,		ORDINARY.

COMPLETE SERMON

The Royal Road of the Holy Cross.

If thou wilt be perfect, . . . follow Me. S. MATTHEW XIX. 21.



GAIN, and not I hope without such fitting emotion and reverence as belong to so great a mystery, again the Christian Church calls us to stand face to face with the Passion of our most holy Redeemer. If the world, if this planet were in such a condition that nothing could put it right except the death of God, and that, remember, is the contention of Christianity, and that is the record of Christian history; if nothing can put us right except the death of God, then we cannot doubt that an event so marvellous, so overwhelming, so unexpected, should carry with it teachings and consequences which are strictly inconceivable. The death of our Redeemer has carried with it, as we know from history, social consequences of the largest kind. Society in consequence of that obscure and scarcely noticed Cross was rooted up, broken to pieces, and then remade. It cannot be denied, that as every age has its own characteristic enthusiasms, so our age in the midst of its feverish activities is constantly set upon social questions and engaged as well as may be in striving to solve what are called social problems.

Once on a time the Church and Christianity were found fault with because, so it was argued—and it was argued, not altogether without reason—because they had allowed themselves an extreme other-worldliness. That time seems to be passing away.

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The energy, the enthusiasm, the earnestness of the strongest speakers, and the hardest workers in the Church seem to be given to questions of labour and capital, of the rates of wages, of the making of houses for people, or better ventilation, or fresher water, or supplies of gas, and of the general elevation of classes, by all sorts of social efforts, some wise and some perhaps unwise. But, anyhow, the social enthusiasm is out, and there is no danger now of other-worldliness. The only danger seems to be that the Christian and the Church may sometimes forget that there are claims for the creatures beyond this life and for the life beyond the grave.

There is no doubt a danger in the great social enthusiasm of our time. A blessed and good and earnest effort there also is in consequence. But what I would say to you is this: in order to diminish the danger, in order to enhance the blessing, you must remember that there is a time for everything, and everything in its time. You must remember that in this sacred season at least we are not saved or lost in classes. Classes are made up of souls and the Church must recollect, and the Church must urge upon you to recollect, that if social movement is to be good, if the danger is to be diminished, and the blessing to be increased, it can only be done when in solemn times like this, we remember that each one of us alone stands face to face with God, that for each one of us our blessed Master died; that the blessings and the power of the noble enthusiasms and the wonderful meritorious redemption of the Cross of the Redeemer is not mercy for classes or for masses or for multitudes, but that unless we are walking in shadows, unless we are making the greatest of mistakes, that tremendous work of the Redeemer must be applied to us soul by soul.

Therefore I ask you to gaze face to face on spiritual truths, and not as if you and you only were face to face with God. I invite you to contemplate the path of perfection of the holy Passion, the way of the soul in the light of the Cross of Christ, or, as S. Thomas à Kempis would put it, the royal road of the Holy Cross. For whatever may be done in society and whatever part you may take in social movements, I still hold, that the great thing of all things for the Church of the Master is to save your soul. I still hold that if your social enthusiasm is to be wisely directed and rightly carried on, it will only be because you are sincere and perfect servants of the Cross of Christ.

And now we are out upon the open sea, and now we have left the rocks and quitted the coast-land. And now the wind of eternity is in our sails, and now above us is the cloud or the sunshine by day, and now before us the immeasurable distance of the possibility of goodness for the creature by the power of the Redeemer. And now

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in the increase of the gloaming there certainly is the rising of the stars. Have we any guidance? that is my question to-day. Have we any guidance for the soul? I submit that we have. The Cross of Christ, whatever else it does, says that the aim before us is the perfect life, and that the way to attain towards it is the following of the Cross of Christ.

‘If thou wilt be perfect, follow Me.’ The perfect life! The moment I utter those words, I am immediately aware of your rising question. Is not that, you say, ideal; is not that impossible? Ideal it certainly is; impossible, remember, it certainly is not. To follow an ideal is to have steadily before you that which some day although not at this moment may be attained. To follow an ideal, to realise that entirely and at this moment it may not be reached, to follow it, to watch it, to guard it, to love it—that is the secret of a noble life.

And here is the ideal, the perfect life; and here is the broad method, the broad method is the Cross: ‘If thou wilt be perfect, follow Me.’ Now let us remember there is our Lord’s direct injunction, ‘Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven.’ And here let me explain, there are details and there are broad views. And you ask me at once, What is it, then, you mean by perfection? Can I really aim at perfection? and can I find a method in the Cross? Holy men have said that the way of perfection, is doing that duty of every day just as every day comes round. There is no short path to perfection, but there is a sure one. ‘Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven.’ Up there in His glory He is perfect because He is complete, sound, thorough in His nature, in His work. And you and I following that great model, and remembering the meaning of that definition, must never forget that, although you may say, Are there not many meanings and many degrees of that perfection? And the answer is, There are many meanings and many degrees, and therefore there is a meaning and a degree for you. Therefore, out of it all comes the great thought, that perfection needs not the hero—that is given to few of us—not the ideal heroism of the hero or the unbounded self-denial of the saint, but that perfection is completeness of character, soundness and thoroughness, the fighting against flaws, the conquering of shams, the refusing of what is hollow, and the using of what is true. And the perfect life of each of us is the life of a sound and solemn and true and thorough character just where God has placed us, just where God has willed us. That perfection is ideal, but it is not impossible, and the way to that perfection is the following of the Cross of Christ.

One step more. We know that our blessed Master spoke many things hard to understand. We know that when we read the New

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Testament that there are many of His sayings that are difficult to apply to modern life. We know that early Christians reading those sayings broke with society. We know that later Christianity has taken up society and made it its own. We know that early Christians resisted and stood apart from trade and art and science and politics, and we know that modern Christianity has embraced them all, and has declared that 'the Christian Church has a charm to take out of them the sting of them all.' We know that we can trust our Master to have taught His Church how to give large interpretations to His words. We know that we make nonsense of His sayings unless we believe that part were limited by the occasion and part were for ever. We know that on the occasion of the text the young man had to sell his goods and give to the poor. That was limited to a special character. If we all did that, society, at any rate for the moment, would be in confusion, and poverty, as a matter of fact, would be increased. There are things that are limited to the occasion. We know that our Lord died upon the Cross and we are to imitate His example, but if we were nailed up to wooden crosses we should be fanatics and we should be suicides. We know there are things of Christ's teaching limited to the occasion and there are things for ever. And we know that if we examine His words very much, we argue about their severity and their difficulty; they are interpreted by His actions. Now draw your distinctions, use your common sense, ask for the guiding of the Church, say what belongs to occasion, and say what is for ever. And then I say there will come home to your soul: putting out the immediate occasion of Judaic opportunity, and the struggle of the young society of Christendom, just beginning, principles which remain for ever. For ever—that is the point. It is right to aim at the perfect life. For ever, it is right to remember that the high aim is a kind of achievement in eternity. For ever, it is right to know that hatred of sham, the annihilation of hollowness, and the aim and struggle for truth, and soundness and thoroughness of character is the aim of aims. And for ever it is right to remember broadly that the path of that perfection, completeness, which is open to all, that the path of that perfection is to follow the Cross of Christ.

Life is that, but life is a great opportunity. So mould your character for the glory of God and for the sake of your fellows on the lines of a great example, to abominate pretences, to struggle to annihilate selfishness, pretentiousness, hollowness, and to detest all sham, to make your character pure, that is a noble ambition, that is an aim which lies before you. Ah, make it yours. It is held out to you by Jesus, and the way towards it is to follow the principles of the Passions. Climb one of the Italian hills and look out before you and

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your eye is riveted by a long stretch of plain and a long stretch of shining sea, but uplift it and you see the cross on the great basilica that marks the place where still is standing Rome. Travel up through London, listen through the noise, raise your eye above the smoke, and there on Ludgate hill you see shining in the sunlight the cross of S. Paul. Lift up your eyes for any life, try to penetrate the smoke, do your duty, work your work, but look beyond the immediate moment, and then, *Stat crux dum evolvitur orbis*. You find in all common things you are invited to soundness, to thoroughness, to perfection. You are guided in it by the sufferings of your Redeemer. 'If thou only wilt be perfect, follow Me.'

CANON KNOX LITTLE.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Efficacy of the Blood of Christ.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? HEBREWS ix. 14.

I. OME part of the difficulty which has been found in the interpretation of this momentous verse has arisen, I think, from misapprehending the exact force of the word 'offered' as here employed. It has been taken for granted that the offering spoken of is the death of Christ; I mean, that Christ is said to have offered Himself to God at the moment when He died for us upon the Cross. But in reality the whole context points another way. It is not the moment of His death, but it is the subsequent presentation of Himself to God in heaven as having died and risen and ascended, which is here spoken of. It is this in the antitype which corresponds to the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place; not to the slaughter of the victim, but to the subsequent carrying of the blood into the place of the mercy-seat. It is not the moment, or the act, of Christ's sacrifice, which is spoken of; but His entrance, after death, after resurrection, after ascension, upon the everlasting work of His priesthood.

And thus we shall arrive at a simple understanding of the words 'through the eternal Spirit.' I should interpret this simply of the Holy Spirit. And a very brief reference to two passages of the Epistle to the Romans will clear the sense in a moment. In one of these, we

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read that Christ was declared to be, 'was defined as, the Son of God with' (in the exercise of) 'power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead.' The resurrection of Christ proved Him to be the Son of God; and that resurrection itself was accomplished by the operation of the Holy Spirit. According to a further statement in the other passage to which I refer: 'if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will at the last day give life to your mortal bodies also' (that is, as well as to those immortal souls which are already in this life quickened) 'by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.' The Holy Spirit, who is there expressly said to be the agent of the future resurrection of all Christians, and who in the former passage is spoken of as the agent of the resurrection of Christ, is here, in the words now before us, described as the instrument of that presentation of Christ Himself to God which follows upon His resurrection.

Again, 'the blood of Christ shall purify' our conscience from dead works.' Dead works are the opposite of living works. They are the works which have no divine life in them. They are the acts of one who, having separated himself from God, either wholly or in the particular instance, cannot please Him, and whose best works, while he is so, have the nature of sin. And these dead works are represented as lying upon the conscience, dragging it down and defiling it, so that there is no freedom in the life within, no conscious and peaceful intercourse between the soul and God, no strength for service because no release from guilt. For such a state the remedy here mentioned is the only medicine. The blood of Christ shall purify our conscience from dead works to serve, and the expression indicates the nature of that service; sacrificial, not servile; the service of a priest, dedicating his life, and every act of that life, to Him whose he is, 'to serve a living God.' Believe that Christ died for thee; believe that by that death He put away sin, even thy sin; and in the strength of that faith dismiss the irrevocable past, and turn to the available future; by one act, or by repeated acts, of self-dedication to God, take up the priestly office, whosoever thou art, however humble, however sinful, and exercise that office in the discharge, as unto God, of all the various functions of thy common calling. 'To whom coming,' even to our Lord Jesus Christ, 'ye also' (addressing all Christians) 'are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'

II. And for this cause, because He has thus died for us, and because His death is of such everlasting efficacy, He is the Mediator of a new dispensation, that, death having taken place, unto redemption, for removal by a ransom, of the transgressions that related to the first dispensation, they that have been called, they to whom the call and

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invitation of the gospel has come, may receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.

1. 'An high priest of good things to come.' Such is Christ's office as here set before us. What use are we making of Christ's priesthood? It is the office of a priest, not only to make one atonement, but to be always at hand for the work of intercession. Whenever any one of us has sinned against God, even in word or in thought only, we have need of the help of our Intercessor. We need that He who entered into the most holy place, as it were, with His own blood, should, by a fresh application of that blood to our special need, remove, over again, the sense of guilt and enable us to set out yet again in the way of our Christian duty.

2. Having obtained eternal redemption for us. We have heard what redemption is: Oh, are we yet, all of us, in the effectual sense redeemed? Are we all set free from sin? Have we all remained from childhood in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free?

3. Rise to the height of your Christian standing, as persons possessing, while your day of grace lasts, everything that can be required to make you safe, to make you happy, to make you holy.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.

But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. HEBREWS ix. 11-15.

THE Apostle divides the subject into two parts, and we will endeavour to follow in his footsteps.

First, he gives us the correct idea of what that redemption was which was purchased for us by our Saviour; and, secondly, he defends it.

I. Let us observe in what this Apostle makes the redemption by our blessed Lord to consist. We have an explanation in the opening words of our text, which serves to give us a right idea of the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ, besides saving us from a multitude of false notions on the subject.

'But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come,' . . . has, he goes on to say, 'obtained eternal redemption for us.' The Apostle here describes the accomplishment of our redemption as something done by Christ in the character of a high priest, and in so doing corrects the impression so common in these days, that the re-

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redemption wrought by Jesus Christ was to be a salvation from sins and errors by means of a clear revelation of the will of God and of our destiny. It would in that case belong to the prophetic office of our Lord. Let us first of all hold fast this idea, that the redemption accomplished by our Saviour consists in something more than doctrine.

But the Apostle thoughtfully adds, 'an High Priest of good things to come.' This expression refers us to the first verse of the chapter from which our text is drawn, and is in contradistinction to the 'ordinances of divine worship under the first covenant.' His meaning is this: the ecclesiastical establishment under the old covenant had indeed its own rights, privileges, and benefits, such as an earthly sanctuary, the ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the table with the shewbread, and so on; but what are these compared with the blessings of that sanctuary over which the Lord Jesus Christ is high priest? There are no earthly, transitory, visible gifts and blessings, but everlasting joys, joys as yet in the future, and hidden from our eyes here below. The gifts, privileges, and blessings gained for us by that redemption will be made known to us only in eternity.

No high priest and no amount of religious ceremonies had hitherto been able to achieve the redemption. 'They could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience' . . . because . . . 'the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.' Therefore the one great sacrifice is in one sense an offering once made, never to be repeated, and, in another, an eternal sacrifice. 'Christ entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Do we not all feel how needful such a redemption is for us, who are continually stumbling and falling? Now, no matter how often man falls, he may in faith repair again and again to the throne of grace, from whence that redeeming strength never ceases to flow. Remember this is no encouragement to carnal presumption or moral indolence. Quite the contrary; where these are to be found, the capacity for faith will be proportionately withdrawn, and with it the desire for the benefits of Christ's propitiation, till at length the heart will become completely incapable of seeing its own need, and the whole system of eternal redemption be to it as nothing. It is only in a truly fervent heart that a faithful seeking for salvation can be found.

II. Now, the foregoing may have succeeded in making clear to you the idea set forth by the Apostle in our text, of the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. But this very idea, that it consists mainly and entirely in the propitiation for sin, through the death and blood-shedding of Christ, is an offence and a stumbling-block to the

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natural mind of man; and it is to obviate this that the Apostle stands ready to defend and justify the explanation that he gives of it against the misconception of the carnal mind and understanding. First of all we must carefully observe the immense value of the price and sacrifice offered by our Saviour to His Heavenly Father for our redemption, and compare it with that of the earthly sacrifices which were all that were offered under the old covenant, and in which we are still but too apt to place great confidence. 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?'

The Apostle draws our attention to the fulness of the sacrifice of Christ when he uses the words we have just read. 'Who through the eternal (or Holy) Spirit offered Himself without spot to God'; and his meaning is this: the external death and blood-shedding are not the only things in His sacrifice. We are to observe, if we wish to place the just value upon it, the perfect purity, innocence, and stainless character of the person who offered Himself of His own free will, and out of His own perfect love, and obedience to God by His holy and eternal Spirit. In other words, the essential aspect of the sacrifice of Christ, in which its real value comes out so remarkably, when we consider the subject with due earnestness, is the purity, holiness, and perfection of the will of the Saviour, which led Him to undertake and carry out that great sacrifice to the very last, till He cried out, 'It is finished.'

III. It is quite certain that the price paid by Christ for the redemption of sins can only avail the individual sinner under one condition, namely, that he appropriates that forgiveness to himself by his own free will. It is this very thing that holy Scripture asserts; we must, through faith in the merits of Christ, accept the forgiveness of our sins. To those who believe not, so long as they persist in that unbelief, the redemption by the death (and blood-shedding) of Jesus Christ is as if it had never happened.

For him who desires to be blessed hereafter, the wisest and best thing to do is to seek earnestly for redemption and salvation through the precious death and blood of Christ, and to examine himself before the most strict tribunal of his own understanding as to whether he is so seeking.

R. ROTHE.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Disinterestedness of Christ.

I seek not Mine own glory. S. JOHN viii. 50.



THE word glory is one of very frequent occurrence in Scripture. To many of us it is a vague and inexpressive sound. 'The glory of God . . . mine own glory . . . manifested forth His glory . . . do all to the glory of God . . .' these expressions convey perhaps to few minds a very definite and explicit meaning. And yet it is a very important expression, the glory of God. Let us try to

understand it.

We read often in the historical books of the Old Testament, of 'the glory of the Lord appearing . . . appearing in the cloud . . . resting upon the tabernacle . . . filling the house of the Lord.' In those days it was a visible sign; a bright light indicating to the senses the more immediate and intended presence of God Himself. But, when the day of type and emblem was gone by; when many ages of a more elementary teaching had prepared men's minds, as doubtless they were designed to do, for conceptions of truth less carnal and more spiritual; then the glory of the Lord ceased to denote a bright light from heaven indicating where God was, and began to signify rather the manifestation of God's attributes, whether of power, truth, or love, the revelation of Himself as He is, the showing forth, by act or word, before the minds and souls of men, of His divine character in some one or more of its real and distinctive features.

I. Christ sought not His own glory. His discourses showed it; showed it in His language towards self-accusing sinners; showed it also in His language towards the self-satisfied and the harsh-hearted.

And did not His life show it too? There were moments even in that life of humiliation at which He might have converted it into one of immediate exaltation. If in the first and most prolonged temptation He was shown all the kingdoms of the world and offered the possession of them on the condition of doing homage for them to the tempter, so, at a later time, we read of His perceiving a design in the people to come and take Him by force to make Him a king, which He frustrated by a resolute retirement into a position of solitude and seclusion. If He would only have listened to the advice of His disciples,

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if He would only have stood aside and suffered them and the multitude to carry out their own prepossessions and wishes concerning Him, He might have known what it was to be the idol of His nation, and to appear to have reached as by a short road that sovereignty which was otherwise to be attained only through the deep waters of suffering and by the rugged road of self-denial and self-sacrifice. But He sought not His own glory. He came to manifest God. He came to bear witness to the truth ; to the realities of the world of substance against the appearances of the world of shadow. And therefore He looked only at the work which had been given Him by His Father, at the lessons which He was to teach by first obeying them, at the cup which He was to sweeten for others by drinking it Himself in its bitterness, of the joy set before Him, not in the time that was, but in the eternity that was to follow.

And this was His reward : that, not seeking His own glory, another sought it for Him. 'I seek not Mine own glory ; there is one that seeketh, and judgeth.' There is one that seeketh to manifest Me to the world, even as I to manifest Him, and who exercises in My behalf that judgment which I refuse to exercise for Myself. According to the testimony borne in two other passages of this gospel : 'I have glorified Thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do ; and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' : and again, 'If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world : He that rejecteth Me, and believeth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day.'

II. 'I seek not Mine own glory.' If Christ laid down for Himself this rule, have we not tenfold cause to do so ? to say, each one for himself, My aim in life is not to show how great I am, or how wise, or how good ; how many talents have been committed to me, or how faithful I am in the improvement of them : no, none of these things : my aim is, to seek the glory of Him who placed me where I am, who intrusted to me certain gifts, great or small, few or many, and whom, to a certain extent, less or greater, I can either, by His help, make better known and more loved upon earth, or else, by my fault and sin, help to hide and obscure from the sight and recollection of His creatures.

It is a great and glorious ambition to which the gospel calls us. To love God first, and then to live for God ; to have God within us first, through Christ, by the Spirit, and then to let the light within shine out through the various openings which connect the life within with the life without ; this is that to which we are called ; this is that which is offered to us ; and we know not, any one of us, before the experi-

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

ment, how very near this glorious attainment is to us, and by what a very simple process, that of merely believing, merely grasping, what we all hold loosely as a truth, that attainment is to be made our own. Let us try, every one of us, for we cannot give it to one another, whether this habitual desire for God's glory may not powerfully, and even speedily, become in some degree really ours.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Reverence.

Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Exodus iii. 5.



THE text is a call to reverence. I need hardly say how much that duty is dwelt upon in Scripture, both in the way of precept and of example.

We must all have been struck with the feeling expressed towards God in the Old Testament. What a profound awe! what a prostrate yet loving adoration! what an admiring sense of His goodness! what a longing, what a hungering and thirst-

ing, after the knowledge, after the sight, of Him!

What is reverence? What are its ingredients, its component parts? What hinders and what helps it in us? And what are some of its blessings?

I. I need not say—for all agree in it—that Gospel reverence must be a thing of the heart. It seems to be compounded of two things: the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves. It is the contact between the sinful and the sinless. It is the access of a conscious transgressor to One who is altogether holy. It is the mind of a created being, who has also fallen, towards One whom he desires above all things still to belong to, still to return to, still to be with, and still to serve.

II. The hindrances to a spirit of reverence lie on the very surface of our life. Things that are seen obscure the things that are not seen. We cannot help feeling earthly things to be very real. 'What can be so real,' we all say to ourselves, 'as this work, this person, this house and garden, this bright sun, this fair world, which is here before my eyes?' Compared with these things, all other knowledge, we think, can be but guessing. The reality even of the Maker is put out of sight by the thing made.

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Irreverence is fostered by everything approaching to unreality of expression in prayer. It is one of the many advantages of our Church Prayers that they are for the most part extremely simple, and (what is not less important for a mixed congregation) perfectly level to humble spiritual attainments. There is little or nothing in them which it is hypocrisy for a very humble Christian to use. An advanced and devoted Christian finds them enough for him, but a backward and very failing Christian can use them without feeling them unreal. There is something perhaps in the mere fact of their being prescribed to us which gives us confidence in using them. It is not so always with other prayers. It is not so always even with our own private prayers: we are apt, some of us, to use expressions which, if we examine them, we shall find to be beyond our mark; beyond the mark of our desire, I mean, and not only of our experience. All such prayers are irreverent. They do not express the mind of a poor sinner kneeling before his holy God. They are more or less the prayers of one who thinks wickedly that God is such an one as himself, and can be misled by words, when the heart is not in them.

III. We all of us, more or less, mourn over a want of reverence. There are times when we terribly miss it.

But God would not have us left here, left thus. Reverence may, by His gracious help through Christ by the Holy Spirit, be gained—yes, regained. We bless Him for that hope. We do believe that He desires not our death but our life: O let us come to Him! We must practise reverence, as well as pray for it. We must always recollect ourselves thoroughly before we begin to worship. In private, we must, if I might so express it, meditate and study God's presence. We must not begin our prayers without trying to set God clearly before us a living Person to whom we are coming, to whom we are about to speak.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Children's Crusade.

A good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 TIM. ii. 3.



SUPPOSE many of you have read of those strange wars called the Crusades? They were undertaken to deliver the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus at Jerusalem out of the hands of the heathen. Thousands of brave men, besides their friends and followers, went to the Holy Land, at different times, to fight in the Crusades. The warriors wore a blood-red cross on their clothing, from which they got their name of Crusaders, and their motto was, 'The Will of God.' It was a very good motto, but not a very true one for them, for I am afraid they did many cruel and wicked things which certainly were not the will of God; and thousands of people perished miserably abroad, who might have been doing useful work at home. Well, amongst these Crusades there was one called the Children's Crusade. A boy in France went about singing in his own language—

*'Jesus, Lord, repair our loss,
Restore to us Thy Holy Cross.'*

Crowds of children followed him, singing the same words. No bolts, no bars, no fear of fathers or love of mothers, could hold them back: they determined to go to the Holy Land, to work wonders there! This mad crusade had a very sad ending; of course young children could do nothing, being without leaders, or experience, or discipline, and they all perished miserably either by land or sea.

I. Now I want you to think about another Children's Crusade, in which you are all engaged. What do we mean when we pray for the Church 'militant here on earth'? We mean the fighting Church, the Church on the battle-field of the world. We are God's army, and every one of us, man, woman, and child, must try to show that he is a good soldier of Jesus Christ. What do you think is required of a good soldier? First of all, he must be brave. You little soldiers of Jesus, members of the Children's Crusade against the world, the flesh, and the devil, must pray to be brave. You must be brave to endure hardness, to deny yourselves for Christ's sake. Every soldier in war-time has to give up much which is pleasant and dear to him: you must not expect to have your own way always if you are Christ's soldiers.

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II. We have seen that soldiers must be brave: what else must they be? Obedient? The first thing a soldier has to learn is to obey orders. If you really love the Lord Jesus Christ, you will keep His commandments.
H. S. WILMOT-BUXTON.

The Day of Christ.

I. **T**HE witness of the Patriarch Abraham to Christ. (S. John viii. 56-58, Gospel.)

a. What is meant by the 'day of Christ'?

Some of the Fathers think that Christ calls the whole of His eternal existence His day, that Abraham desired to see His day—that is, to know Him inasmuch as He was God. 'He saw His day, because he recognised the mystery of the Trinity.'—S. Augustine.

Others say, that he calls the time of His Cross and Passion His day.—S. Chrysostom.

But I think it clear that His day is His coming in the flesh and the whole time during which He dwelt in this world. For both the phrase itself signifies this, and it is evident that it was this which, not Abraham only, but all the Fathers of the Old Testament desired to see. (S. Luke x. 24.)—Maldonatus.

b. How did Abraham see the day of Christ?

All authors whom I remember to have read, even those who think that Christ called the time of His Incarnation 'His day,' consider that Abraham saw it either by faith alone, or by faith and in type, or by prophetic revelation. All agree that it was by faith, nor is it at all doubtful that by faith he apprehended that Christ would come. But the types are variously interpreted. Most think that in Isaac, whom Abraham himself gave up to sacrifice, who was a plain type of Christ about to die for us, Abraham beheld, as in a mirror, the day of Christ. But some refer it to that time when he saw Three and adored One.

II. We have here a proof of the Divine Nature and pre-existence of Jesus.

'That is, "I have been from eternity"—"I Am that I Am" (Exodus iii.), that is "I am God." The word, "Am," denotes eternity of existence, because it denotes a constant present, without past or future. "I therefore Am, Eternal, Unchangeable, Abiding, and Constant."

III. In Abraham we see the great type of the faithful soul, to whom the mysteries of heavenly things are revealed.

Strong and weak Faith.

ILLUSTRATIONS

'A father was once amusing his children with an electric machine, and after one or two had received the shock they drew back from the apparatus with evident dread. The father presently held out the jar uncharged, and consequently harmless, and said, "If you touch it now, you will feel nothing. Will you try?" The children drew back with their hands behind them. "Don't you believe me?" asked he. "Yes, sir," and the hands were held out to prove their faith, but were quickly withdrawn before they reached the dangerous knob. One alone, a timid little girl, had enough confidence to trust her father by touching it. The rest believed, but had not heartfelt faith.'

S. J. EALES.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

The Blood of Christ. WHEN the destroying angel sees the blood of the spotless

Lamb of God on the doorposts and lintel of our hearts
HEB. ix. 11. (the City of My-soul), he will pass over without destroying.

Then Satan comes and says, God will by no means spare the guilty; and by fair words and subtle speeches endeavours to obtain a footing in the city. But he, too, sees the blood-marks, and is arrested; he cannot enter, and with a malignant scowl passes by.

Then Conscience assails the city, and harasses it by bringing to remembrance all the deep and dark sins of the past, and asks whether salvation is possible for such. It, too, is silenced by the blood, and remembers that 'the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth from all sin.'

We must not put our faith in the place of the Saviour, but in Him. He said to the Israelites, 'When I see the blood,' not 'When you see it.' Lord, I cannot see my assurance in Christ as I want to see it, but Thou canst. Forgive my sin and save my soul.

No doubt many an anxious and weak-hearted Israelite feared and trembled lest the blood on the lintel should not be seen, nor be efficacious; but this did not alter his fate. When God saw the blood, it was sufficient—the destroyer passed over that house.

The Eternal Redemption. JUDGMENT WAS averted by the sprinkling of blood—type; but we have the blood of Christ, as of a Lamb slain for

HEB. ix. 11, 12. us. His is the blood of sprinkling which we must use, for there is salvation in no other.

Two simple truths are taught:

I. The way of salvation is easy.

1. For the Israelites. The blood was shed, stood ready. The hyssop was a very common wayside thing, easily obtained outside any cottage. They had but to obey, sprinkle the blood, to be safe on that dreadful night.

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2. For us too. The blood is shed; all is ready for our using. We have to exercise faith in it, and faith is a common every-day thing—we live by it. The sun sets, we believe it will rise again; we sow seed, we believe it will grow; we enter a boat, because we believe it will carry us across a stream, etc. Faith is an easy thing, and yet it is the way of salvation. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.' etc.

II. The great peril of neglect.

1. Neglect then. The blood was put into a basin; suppose they left it there, neglected, or forgot what to do with it—there would have been no escape.

2. Neglect now. Treating the blood of Christ as a common thing—a theme for the preacher—nothing to us—of no value. Or worse, treading it under foot, putting it on the threshold instead of on the doorposts and lintel of our hearts, counting it an unholy thing, and so crucifying Christ afresh.

3. How shall we escape if we neglect such great salvation? A man may neglect taking his medicine, or throw physic to the dogs, or out of the window, and so imperil his health; but in the matter of salvation he risks everything by neglect.

A Jewish Legend.

ON the night of the Passover in a Jewish family there lay ill in bed a little daughter. She knew of the instructions HEB. ix. 11-15. given by Moses for their safety; she understood their urgency and the importance of obedience. As night drew on she asked her father whether the blood had been sprinkled as commanded. 'Hush, child,' he replied; 'I ordered it to be done.' Waiting a while and not being satisfied, the child again asked the same question; and again the father answered as before. But as midnight drew near, and her anxiety could not be restrained, she raised herself and said, 'Father, take me in your arms and carry me outside, that I may see whether the blood is sprinkled on the doorposts and lintel.' He did so, but only to find that his order had not been executed. Then, the story relates, at the last moment he rushed into the house, seized the hyssop-brush, and with a swish dashed the blood on the posts and lintel, and thus made the household secure. It was all but too late. How narrow the escape! Those that neglect suffer equally with the despisers in the Day of Judgment.

The inheritance of believers.

HEB. ix. 11-18. Rust does not corrupt it, decay does not consume it, death does not destroy it. It contemplates union to Him, who only hath immortality, and is called 'Eternal.' An inheritor is a possessor—one who has come into the possession of property or privileges to which by heirship he was

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entitled; not one who has a right to come into them hereafter (heir). The Prince of Wales is 'heir' to the kingdom of England; but the 'inheritor' of the kingdom is the Queen. By baptism we enter into actual possession of the blessed privileges of the Christian Church. The grace or favour is actually given to us of enjoying all its means of grace. These advantages may be used or misused—may end in final salvation or otherwise. But such privileges are ours to give an account of—'we cannot be as the heathen.'

Death in Christ. LET us then reflect on death in Jesus Christ, not without Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ, it is dreadful, it is S. JOHN viii. 46. detestable, it is the terror of nature. In Jesus Christ, it is lovely, it is holy, it is the joy of saints. All things are sweet in Jesus Christ, death itself not excepted.

Death of the Faithful. LET us not regard the faithful, who are departed in the grace of God, as having ceased to live, though nature S. JOHN viii. 50. suggests this; but as beginning to live, which is what truth declares. Let us regard their souls, not as lost and annihilated, but as animated, and united to the sovereign life.

The Sunday next before Easter

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	PHIL. II. 5-11.
GOSPEL	S. MATT. XXVII. 1-54.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	EXODUS IX.
SECOND MORNING LESSON	S. MATT. XXVI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	EXODUS X. or XI.
SECOND EVENING LESSON	S. LUKE XIX. 28 or S. LUKE XX. 9 to 21.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Secret Discipleship.

And after this, Joseph of Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews), besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus : and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus (which at the first came to Jesus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. S. JOHN xix. 38-40.



WHAT a wonderful incident! About the very last two men that you ever would have thought in Jerusalem are meeting together. They desire to bury the Crucified after His death : Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. What a strange meeting it must have been, when Joseph met Nicodemus and Nicodemus met Joseph at the foot of the cross. They knew one another very well. They met in common daylight. They were men of the same class. They were men who showed the same ecclesiastical interest. They were members of the same great Sanhedrin, the same great council of the Jews. They had never talked to one another about what they really and

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truly shared in common about Jesus. Each of them had kept any influence that the Christ had over him quietly shut up in his own mind. And while Nicodemus had gone by night and talked with Jesus, he never told Joseph that he had any knowledge of Him. And although Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, he was just as secret about it as Nicodemus was. Then there came that strange moment upon Calvary, and Joseph was conscious of an attraction; he was drawn to Calvary. And Nicodemus was conscious of an attraction; he was drawn to Calvary. And these old friends, who had never known what was going on in the secret of their hearts, met at the foot of the cross. 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' For you must remember that it was a very bold act of these men to come out in the way in which they did. In the first place, both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus belonged to the rich and cultured section of Jewish society, while this Jesus of Nazareth was only a poor carpenter, and the people best known as His followers were nothing better than fishermen, and the greater part of them came from despised Galilee. You see, to stand out on the Christ side was to give a slap in the face to that section—that cultured, exclusive section—of society to which they belonged. It involved social ostracism. To stand out on the side of Christ meant in that day to put yourself in antagonism to the whole stream of the higher section of society, and to be excommunicated. Not only that, but Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were men of very high ecclesiastical interests. They occupied a very high position in the ecclesiastical circle. They were numbered with the rulers of the Jews, members of the great council of the nation. And the decree had gone forth that if anybody said Jesus was Christ he should be cast out of the synagogue. To acknowledge the claims of Jesus as the Christ meant worse than social excommunication; it meant ecclesiastical excommunication. And then, not only that, but it meant the forfeiting of all prospect of ambition. To be looking on the movements of the Christ in the spirit of a large-hearted and large-minded sympathy, and to patronise the Christ—ah, that did not cost anything. But here were these two men, high up in the world of their day, with great political prospects before them, and if only they stood up right straight for the Christ there would be a collapse of political prospects.

The cry comes home to us. These men were just what we are. They were men face to face with just the same temptations that act upon us. And I think they were quite convinced in their own hearts of the truth of the Christ. They could not come out and confess Christ, because if they did it meant social excommunication, ecclesiastical excommunication, and the ruin of all prospects and ambition. And so they went on in their way, their life an active life. I cannot

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conceive the position of anything which is at once more despicable and more pitiable than the man who cannot be true to his inner convictions, who dare not say out what he thinks because of what it will cost him, who dare not act according to his convictions because of what it would cost him. Poor, miserable, despicable self! There is no slavery so great. An external persecution may do this—it may do to death the man who has the courage of his convictions and says: ‘I will die before in word or in deed I will be false to my conviction.’ That is the call of the martyr. But Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, up to the time that Christ died, were not on the high road to martyrdom—nothing like it, nothing so glorious. They were poor, miserable, pitiable people after all. They were not men. They had not the pluck to be men. Ah, but they cannot go on in this way. After all, there was a great deal about them that was noble. They would be men if they had the courage. They would speak out what they believed if they only dared. They had been brought to conviction. ‘He was a disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews.’ And the other had come to Jesus by night. Ay, but the one who came to Him by night will have to come to Him by day, and the one who has been a secret disciple must be an open disciple; because there is a great, good God watching over them both, who means to perfect the work that He has begun. Only, you know, it never gets easier to confess the Christ as you put it off, but always gets harder. In this case, poor Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came to confess the Christ just at the time when He is despised and rejected of men, just at the very time when to confess Christ demanded, involved, the greatest risk, under the constrainings of a conscience whose voice was imperative, as moved by the Holy Ghost; they had to confess the Christ on the cross. Were not they splendidly brave? I do not know, really, if you consider these circumstances, that there ever was a more generous or a braver act in the world than when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came and met at the foot of the cross to confess Christ. The splendour of that courageous act takes away all power of our condemning their previous cowardice. Ay, I can sympathise with them in their cowardice. I have been a great moral coward, and I dare say you have. Would to God we could be raised up to sympathy with them in their courage. At all events, neither you nor I can take a stone and fling it at Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple. How many men there are even at the present time who are secret disciples! You come up to London, and you know that in the safety that is given in London’s crowded life, men and women are under the regular habit of worshipping under conditions of beauty of ritual, under the sound of boldness of teaching,

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and take their place in London congregations as if they were loyal to the Christ and the Catholic Church, who pack up their catholicism with their best dress when they go from London and do not take it down to the country. It will not do. It is not worthy of our manhood. What we believe we must speak, what we believe we must do. I can quite feel for an unbeliever who turns his back upon the Christ. I admire the bold Christian who confesses the Christ. But I condemn,—nay, nay, I will use a much tenderer word—I pity from the bottom of my heart the man who has got enough religion to feel that he ought to be a Christian, and not enough pluck to be a Christian. It is a most desperate position. These men found it so. What they felt was this: a great crime had been committed, and a blood-guiltiness was upon the nation, and they could not be still until they had set themselves free. ‘We have sinned, for we have condemned innocent blood.’ They must come in the face of that cry and deliver themselves from its blood-guiltiness.

What is life worth if it is not lived in self-respect? They could not respect themselves. They might act very well before other people and constrain, when condemned by hypocrisy, a respect which would be lost immediately if the hypocrisy ceased. What is it worth, the applause that I get from voices outside of me, when my own conscience tells me I have no right to it?—it is a lie. Life is not worth having unless it is under the conditions of self-respect. They came face to face with that magnificent vision of obedience unto death, even the death upon the cross. From this position of compromising knowledge they had been wrought into the boldness of a magnificent confession.

And yet again, conscience for the whole time was convicting. To know what one ought to do and not to do it, and to know that every moment of disloyalty I am simply laying up treasure for the inevitable judging that awaits me: I cannot go on under this condemning of a God-stirred conscience, which is only stirred within by God’s love to save me from inevitable, eternal hell.

And this is the very point to which I wish to bring you now. I want you to take a distinct and definite act of confession of the Christ. And I will tell you in what way I want that act of confession to be made: make your Easter Communion the Sacrament—you know the meaning of that word. It is a word which theology has borrowed from old Roman life. The *sacramentum* was the oath that the Roman soldier took to Cæsar—to the king. I want you to stand out and take the oath of loyalty this coming Easter Day in sincerity. Do not take it in insincerity. I go down on my bended knees and pray you not to make your Easter Communion if you do not mean it. Do not do it for any other reason, constrained by external influences—whether it comes within the limits of the family, the persuasion of the wife, or

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whatever it may be—do not take it because people will say, ‘Why don’t you make your Easter Communion?’ For the love of God do not communicate unless you are going to do it in reality. Do not commit the awful act of consummated unreality, of virtually making a communion which would be like the kiss that the traitor kissed Jesus Christ. I say I would go before any one of you who, I thought, was going to make an Easter Communion which he did not mean; I would go upon my bended knees and plead with him, as he would not insult his God and peril his salvation, not to dream of doing it.

Yes, but then you would not be here week by week, would you, if you meant to be like that? Now, knowing how weak you are towards goodness, how strong you are towards evil, if yet you want to be Christ’s, never mind the shrinking, never mind the fear, come and own Christ in your communion on Easter Day. If you do not mean to be Christ’s, do not insult Him by taking His sacrament, but if you do, never mind how weak you are, come and breathe out the love in your Easter Communion: confess Christ.

Ah, but there are some difficulties you have to get over. The first difficulty is just this, ‘I dare not.’ Why dare not you? ‘Because I am not going to insult the Christ; I am not going to make my communion on Easter Day and then go back and live according to the world, the flesh, and the devil. I won’t do that.’ Well, which master are you to serve? ‘Well, I should like to be Christ’s, of course. I know that if I were the Christ’s, my life here would be a happier life, my home life would be better; I should be saved from all kind of perils; I should go on my way, I know, in a happier conscience, and when I came to die I should find Him with me.’ Then you are going to stand out for Christ? ‘No.’ Why, why? ‘Oh, I should be laughed at.’ Of course you will. You do not mean to think you can serve the Christ and not have to suffer for it? ‘If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me.’ And the Cross always involves a certain amount of shame; of course it does. I do not want to cheat you. But now, come, do you mean to say this, that you are going to live your life as a moral coward? Because that is what it comes to: ‘I would be a Christian if I dared.’ Well, we are continually told that Christian people are made up of women and what a popular newspaper called ‘ecclesiastically-minded laymen.’ Well, at all events the women and the ecclesiastically-minded laymen have got stuff that you have not got. You would be a Christian if you dare? Please do not talk about milksops in the future. At all events, we have got the courage to do what you dare not do. Do not put yourselves in an imaginary position as if you are the people who have got all the bravery in the world, when you have not got the courage to be what you would like to be, if you dared. There

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is one thing which is impossible. A coward cannot be a Christian. He can only become a Christian by being converted from cowardice to bravery, and every true and righteous man in God's world is a brave man, and he can only be righteous by being brave.

Well, what will you be? A moral coward? Well, at all events we take to ourselves the flattering unction that there is one shame we can never bear, and that is the shame of cowardice. Well, prove the reality of it. Have the courage to do what Joseph of Arimathea did. Have the courage to come out straight for the Christ and take Him as your King.

There is another difficulty I have to deal with. It is not that 'I dare not'; it is not that 'I lack courage'; but 'I cannot, I lack hope.' 'I lack hope; I cannot be a Christian. You do not think that I have known the most awful longings to be set free from sin; you do not think that I have known the most awful longings after righteousness. I have made up my mind again and again that I would spring from this awful tyranny of my miserable low disgust of self. I have a positive self-loathing. I have resolved, I have tried again and again and again; but it has, as always, but the same end. Can you help me?'

Yes, I can. There is a living Christ with a hand outstretched to help; for every struggling sinner a message of hope. Yes, though like Simon Peter thou art sinking in the waters of temptation, clutch the outstretched hand of Christ and He will hold thee up. Clutch the outstretched hand of Christ and He will lead thee, and He will bear thee safely through the battle. Thou mayest be wounded, thou mayest know checks and failures even in His hand—but defeated? No, no. No one is finally defeated who has grasped the hand of Christ. Though he fall he should not be cast away, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand. There is salvation in the Christ, not simply salvation from a mere contemptible selfish fear of what awaits him in the future because of the past, not simply salvation from sin's guilt, but salvation at least up to this point, from living a life in which I have responded almost without resistance to the impulses of the passionate nature of a man, to the point to which I am enabled to live a fighting life.

And we have nothing to do with victory. That is in His hand. He may come when and where He will: what we have got to do is fighting, and to die fighting is to die saved—nay, to die fighting is to die crowned. I cannot command victory, but I can, and God helping me to the end, I will fight—fight with my lower nature, fight with this evil world, fight beneath the blood-red banner of the Cross against the leading forces of evil. I will take Him, though it be after long delay, though it be, like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, at the foot of the cross, and be true to the baptismal obligation which was

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mine when the sacred mark of my Saviour was stamped upon my brow.

And so I go upon my way, and you go upon yours. But God grant that we go on our way through life in the future open disciples of the Lord Jesus and men bravely fighting without and within the battle of righteousness. And if it be so, we shall know a glad meeting some day—

When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's fought and won—

in that fair land where the victors meet for ever and keep an eternal victors' peace, which is nothing else than this, an eternal Easter Day—the Easter of risen men and women, in the unity of the risen Christ, in the presence of God and the glory of the risen Lord. O God, of Thy mercy give us grace so to be faithful in this life and conflict, that together we may know the victor's joy and the victor's song in the eternal Easter of the resurrection Church.

CANON BODY.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Christ Emptying Himself of His Glory.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. PHIL. ii. 5-11.



F you look accurately at the entire description of Christ which is here set forth for our imitation, you will observe that it is something more than a lesson of humility, as humility is generally but imperfectly understood. For I would have you to notice that the expression, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,' precedes, not the mention of His voluntary degradation only, but two other things—His high position in the form of God and in an equality of God from which He descended, and a subsequent elevation to which He arose, as high and higher than He was before—'a Name which is above every name,' and at which 'every knee shall bow.' Do not say that these are points in which Christ stands alone and all imitation is impossible. We cannot follow Him in the letter, indeed, in these high things, but neither can we in the path by which He

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went down to the depths of His agonies. But in all we can and we must follow Him at the distance of our own proper measurement. There is a nearness to God, and a confidence and a light and a glory in that nearness, in which every child of God is, and is bound to know and feel that he is—for it is a simple fact—and it is from this conscious height of the Divine favour that he is to go down to all his renunciation of his own goodness, and to all his lowliest offices of sympathy, and to all his meanest services for the Church's sake, and to all his daily martyrdom for Christ. And after and beyond all this, when the trial and the discipline are over, and the servile work is done, he is to look on, with a holy ambition, to a rising, in Christ and with Christ and for Christ, to purchased heights of dignity, above all which is conceived in God's creation, and to which these very descendings are the only steps of ascent. And this triple thought—which is indeed the only true humility—the height of a believing confidence, the depths of service, the subsequent elevation to greater dignity—is plainly in the words of the one comprehensive precept, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.'

But the instruction which we most want now is, how to go down. Therefore this the Apostle shows in detail; for it is observable that while our Lord's mounting to His glory is simply declared as a fact, His descent is drawn out and set before us in six several stages, of which each one goes lower than the last. The only apparent exception to this regular progression is in the seventh verse, in which His taking the form of a servant is placed before His being made in the likeness of men, which it would seem rather that it ought to follow. But it is not so in reality; for Christ's taking the form of a servant has reference to His adopting the nature of our race, which is essentially made for service; and we may take the Apostle's reasoning in another place as a sort of argument from the greater to the less—'for He took not upon Him the nature of angels'—(though even then it would have been a servant's, for the angels are all servants)—but He did more—He took on Him 'the seed of Abraham,' whom God emphatically calls 'my servant.' So that the series of His wonderful condescensions will stand thus. First, 'He made Himself of no reputation'—of this we shall see more clearly the meaning presently. Then 'He took upon Him,' by selecting the human mind and body as his tabernacle, 'the form of a servant.' Then He was content to be made or to grow up 'in the likeness of men.' Then, 'being found in fashion as a man,' He performed many most submissive acts—'He humbled Himself.' Then that process went on to the most humbling thing which ever befalls the creature—death: 'He became obedient unto death.' And, in dying, He went to the bottom of death's abyss, 'even the death of the cross.'

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II. There were other emptyings which went to make that great abandonment. Thousands and tens of thousands of angels had been wont to count it life to minister to Him—but now who shall wait on Him who waits on all? Just once or twice, like a ray in the darkness, making the coldness and the loneliness the greater when it is past, a winged visitor executes for Him some loving office. But else the servant is servantless. Retinue, attention, He who was wont to be the centre of every eye has none. There are men who have given up their establishments for Christ's and the Church's sake—they did well—they followed their Master at an infinite distance, but what diminution of pomp or comfort or this world's show can be named after His!

And kings have voluntarily abdicated thrones—but never was such a throne as His left empty by its rightful occupant; and He reserved nothing—no, not the honour of abdication.

And, dearer still than attendant hosts or royal power, He surrendered liberty. He, who could pass from place to place throughout infinity as spirit, now, as flesh, submits to the narrow laws of matter, and limits and fetters Himself in a body. His own will is no longer the rule of life: He came 'not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him.' He must submit to circumstances, which very circumstances were once submitted to His own Providence. He feels the crampings of daily life—the cumberings of weak humanity—the imprisonments of existence. To the perfection from which He came down He must climb again by the sufferings which He endures. Infinite knowledge must learn—Almighty strength must wait—the voice of the Creator must supplicate—Essential Life must go into the grave.

J. VAUGHAN.

The Mind of Christ.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. PHIL. ii. 5.

THE week on which we enter to-day has been called in the Church by several names: 'the Great Week,' because its events dwarf all other events that have happened on this earth; 'the Holy Week,' because we cannot recall its memories without a special awe and sense of sacredness in them; or more simply still, 'Passion Week,' because it is dedicated to thought of the Saviour's Passion or suffering.

As with its names, so with its lessons. They are many. Lessons in the story as a whole—the one mysterious, astounding event, the supreme tragedy of human sin and Divine love: and lessons in all

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the several parts of it—its stages and moments, its gathering up, in word and speaking act, of earlier teaching, its revelation for good or ill of the ‘thoughts of many hearts,’ its unfolding of one aspect and another of the perfect human character of the Divine Sufferer Himself.

‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery (rather, as it is in the Revised Version, ‘counted it not a prize’) to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.’

Let us follow first S. Paul’s argument, and then try to bring his conclusion home to ourselves.

I. He sees in the Passion of our Lord the crown and climax of the stupendous act of condescension which began in His incarnation. Though He was ‘in the form of God’—form, that is, in its philosophical, not in its popular sense,—though He was, in His essential attributes, God, He did not feel that the prerogative of Godhead was something to prize, to clutch at, to enjoy for Himself, but He (literally) emptied Himself, and took on Him the form, the essential attributes (again), of a servant. The Lord of all became the servant, the slave, of all—not in appearance, but in reality. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient—submitted Himself to the will of the Father, even to the point of drinking the cup, to His true human nature the bitter cup, of death, and death in its most painful and humiliating form, ‘even the death of the cross.’

We may notice two points which S. Paul emphasises.

1. The condescension has its roots in our blessed Lord’s conception of the scope and value of His own divine prerogatives. It was He through whom all that is, is. Yet to Him that pre-eminence was not a thing to set store by in itself. From that infinite height He stooped to the level of the creatures of His hand—that He might serve. The Creator valued His creative power, laid aside readily the Creator’s prerogatives, that He might help, might serve, His creature.

2. The condescension was complete—not measured or stinted. The cup was drained to the dregs. He came to do His Father’s will, and He did it—‘felt all, that He might pity all,’ bore what to man is the extremity of pain and shame, that He might save man from pain and shame.

II. There is something of the sense of which I was just speaking, of passing from infinite differences to infinitesimal ones, of turning

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the eyes from light so bright that nothing for the time is visible after it, when we pass from contemplating this infinite self-humiliation to think how we can in any true sense imitate it. Yet S. Paul bids us so pass. It is his very purpose in so painting the divine condescension—'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.'

What can it mean to us?

1. In the first and chief place it must mean that the consciousness of this infinite condescension of God for us must transfigure life to us, break down once and for all our pride, show us the true proportions of things, open our hearts to Him who has done so much for us.

2. But besides this great universal lesson we may gather perhaps two more particular thoughts from the example of the divine condescension as S. Paul puts it before us.

a. One thought.—What can pride or conceit mean in us? Put them at their best. Suppose we have something, some gift or grace, some intellectual ability, or bodily power, or social position, which really lifts us in some trifling degree above others of our kind. How do we view such distinctions? Do we 'count them as a prize,' as something on which to pride ourselves, something to enjoy or use for our own benefit? If so, we part company at once with the Great Example. The only true, ennobling view of anything that makes one man to differ from another, is that which shows it as an opportunity, an obligation of service.

b. The second thought.—Are we not apt, even when we forget ourselves, to measure our self-forgetfulness, to make reservations which spoil it, take its grace and happiness and power from it? Let us think again of the example. He was not content with the one great condescension. Having put Himself on our level, He humbled Himself not only as God, but as man—the lowliest lot, the path of pain and shame. One thought only was before Him—to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work.

DEAN WICKHAM.

The Humility of the Lord.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. PHIL. ii. 5-11.

I. **P**ERHAPS to some the expression humility, applied to our Lord, appears inappropriate. But this is certainly a mistake. For, indeed, viewed aright, of whose humility can we really

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speak, if not of His? In the full sense of the word of His only; for He alone is truly high; we others, if we are humble, only do what ought to appear quite reasonable. Thus it is that the Lord calls himself 'lowly in heart' (S. Matt. xi. 28), and when the apostle uses the word 'lowliness' in our text, he points out the matter unmistakably enough.

We may therefore speak confidently of a holy humility of the Lord, but the chief thing is, to learn to know it in its true form; our text instructs us in this. It describes to us the humility of the Lord from two sides. In the first place, it refers to it in that holy self-alienation of the Son of God, by which He, though He was in the form of God, yet thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but came in our flesh, and exchanged the divine state of His existence for our human one. This was true humility, when the Son of God, whom all the angels adore, came down from the bosom of the Father to our poor earth, to seek and to save that which was lost! But yet from this side, we cannot possibly form a clear conception of the humility of the Lord, but tread silently here in His footsteps: here we can only cast a glance into the unfathomable depths of love, which drew Him down to such a depth of humiliation, and in weakness again love Him who has loved us so far above our comprehension.

But our text leads us a step further, and shows us the holy humility of the Lord from another side. As the Son of God's becoming man was an act of the deepest humility, so also the earthly life of the Son of God made man appears to us a life in holy humility.

Holy obedience was the inmost essence of the holy humility of the Lord. But consider it well!—an obedience, which assumes the nearest and most intimate relation of communion with His heavenly Father, a constant life in Him and with Him. His humility was nothing else than an ever deepening life of communion with the Father; and therefore, although a way through lowliness, shame, and sufferings, yet the true way to the highest glory, to the name which is above every name, at which every knee bows of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.

II. These are the crude outlines of the picture of the holy humility of Jesus. How does it interest us?

I think it certainly causes us, in the first place, to feel the entire beauty and glory of humility, which we always feel when we see it in the ordinary life of man. But here we see that it also manifests the divine glory. It is just this which brings the consciousness of God to full life within us. It is the glory of humanity at large. It is quite the contrary with all the tawdry finery of human imagina-

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tion and glory. How little and poor human pride appears by the side of it! The really humble man is the true man, the true image of God. So we feel, as we stand over against this picture, the whole value of humility. It is that which deifies mankind and leads him to glory, while it makes him little in the way of constant obedience towards God, destroys his self-sufficiency and self-love, and thereby makes him capable of sharing the divine glory.

But we also feel its earnestness. True humility is true obedience. Wilt thou then humble thyself to thy master, do not attempt it in a self-chosen way,—be faithful and obedient in small, even in the smallest things: then thou art humbling thyself. But much is certainly required for such humility, the essential part of which is obedience: an inward intercourse and communion with God, child-like confidence in God, constant intercourse of heart with Him. For true humility we must in all things have found the true God, in His word, in our consciences, in the guidance of our life, even in the smallest particulars. In all these we must hear His voice.

It is well for us that such a humility is no empty vision, that we can really strive after it! In Christ—in whom the living God comes so near to us, and we can become so intimate with Him—in the meek and lowly Jesus, who humbles us with a gentle hand, draws us with gentle leadings of the Spirit.

R. ROTHE.

The Humility of Christ.

Being found in fashion as a Man; He humbled Himself. PHIL. II. 8.

I. **T**HE Apostle in these words, which are part of the epistle for this day, sets before us for contemplation and imitation the humility of Christ as a man: 'Let this mind be in you which was in Jesus Christ.' Our blessed Lord had told the disciples that the office of the Comforter whom He would send when He Himself was taken from them would be to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of righteousness He explained: 'Because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more.' Christ, by His life and His death, left a pattern of righteousness in human nature which the world had never seen or known before. Philosophy had elaborated ideal characters, abstract virtues had been discussed and analysed and defined, and the various schools and sects had set morals to live up to their own abstract ideal. But this righteousness—the righteousness of Christ—was no abstraction; it was the righteousness of a Man born into the world, living in the world, and departing from the world by death as other men do. It was the righteousness of a person, the expression of

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his character in thought, word, and deed, and it bore the impress of His personality. It was this, and no mere shadowy abstraction that the Holy Spirit shed abroad in the heart of men, to make it known and bring it home to them, and that not to a privileged few only, not to a sect or school, or even a particular race or nation, but to all, Gentile and Jew alike, to all sorts and conditions of men, called by a merciful and loving Father to come to Christ, and through Him to the knowledge and love of God. It is no wonder then that Christianity, in learning by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and finding itself convinced of the righteousness of Christ, found also in Him new virtues, new ideals, new standards of morality.

And when He had returned unto His Father, and they saw Him no more, the grace of the Holy Spirit there dawned upon the hearts of those that had known Him, and through them upon the world, the consciousness that one now taken from them had been present on this earth, and in a form perfectly human, reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting, a new ideal of righteousness, a new example of goodness revealed in a Man, and so made possible to men. And gradually, as the work of the Spirit went forward, and the hearts of men in ever-widening circles were opened to His influence, to these convictions of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, with which it was the office of the Spirit to stir the conscience of the world, the excellencies, the virtues of the sinless Christ, were perceived and recognised as exhibited in His life and character. And, more than that, they were found to be a source of energy, a motive power in the souls of men such as neither precepts of law nor maxims of philosophy had either discovered or applied.

II. Among these virtues of Christ's humanity thus brought to dwell among men was humility—a virtue which lies at the foundation of the Christian character, a virtue unknown to the moral philosophy of the ancient world. 'Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.' The Apostle is not now speaking of the infinite condescension whereby He, as God, left the glory that He had with the Father before the worlds were made, and came down from above, and abhorred not the Virgin's womb, and was made Flesh and dwelt among us, Jesus, our Immanuel here; but rather he is speaking of the humility of Christ as Man, by which as a child, though conscious that He was about His Father's business, He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to Joseph and Mary, and was bred up as a carpenter; that humility with which during His ministry He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself; that humility by which He became obedient unto death, even the shameful, ignominious death of the Cross. Christ Himself laid emphasis on this as the initial virtue of Christianity when He took the little child and set him in the midst,

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and taught His disciples that unless they received the kingdom of heaven as a little child they could in no wise enter therein. Humility is the first condition of the high estate to which Christianity can and does raise the human soul. 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'

III. What is the daily attitude of true humility? It is that of true self-knowledge, repentance; it is cognisant in itself of short-coming, of frailty, of sin; and the soul that is thus open to the grace of God is contrite and sorry for sin. It is stricken with the feeling of its own unprofitableness and helplessness, and in its humility it cries to God for help, and yet feels: 'Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof.' And what saith the Holy Spirit in reply? What saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity? 'I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' At this holy season we are especially called to meditate upon the humility, the self-abasement of Christ for us sinners. 'And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death' for our sake, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility. What comfort and consolation for those who are grieved and wearied with the burdens of sin! God who has given this mighty evidence of His love in the person of our Redeemer, has in Christ's humility pointed out the first step out of the flood of sin, the first step in the true path of a holy life: 'Oh, set me upon the rock that is higher than I.' With humility comes the grace, the courage, the fortitude necessary for the Christian warfare. The truly brave are, as a rule, modest and humble. Is the figure that represents Christ as the Lamb of God without its counterpart in that which represents Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah?

Humility sweetens life, not only to the individual, but to the family and community. How lovely in the family circle is the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit!

And, finally, humility is a brave helper and comforter in sorrow and trial and tribulation. It finds balm in Gilead and strengthens the trust, the goodness, and loving-kindness of Him who will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. And when the end draws nigh it has the peace of resignation, it has the calm assurance of the presence of the Comforter within, with whom the soul can fear no evil though it be in the valley of the shadow of death.

E. WARRE.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Name of Jesus.

A Name which is above every name. PHIL. II. 9.

WE cannot think too much of Jesus Christ, or praise Him too highly. In everything He is supreme. Among the sons of men there are many greater and nobler than the rest who win our esteem and our love: but when He appears in His divine glory, they fade away like stars before the sun.

I. There are many names and titles by which the Redeemer is known to us, and each of them has its own sweetness and richness of meaning. He is called Immanuel, which means 'God with us'; Shiloh, which means 'A Place of Rest'; the Sun of Righteousness, the Lamb of God, the Bright and Morning Star, the Good Shepherd, the Lord our Righteousness, the Dayspring, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.

But perhaps the name by which He is best known to His people on earth is that life-giving and joy-bringing name of 'Jesus,' which means 'a Saviour.' This was the name divinely appointed for our Lord, and by it all the world shall yet delight to know and love Him. For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The name of Jesus is held precious to the people of God, not for itself chiefly, but for the great divine reality it suggests to our minds. It is the Lord Jesus Himself, and not His name simply, that is so dear to us.

When Sir James Mackintosh was lying upon his deathbed, whenever a verse of Scripture was read to him he always showed by some sign that he heard it. 'And,' says his daughter, 'I especially observed that at every mention of the name of Jesus Christ, if his eyes were closed, he always opened them, and looked at the person who had spoken. Once, after a long silence, he said, "I believe——" We said, in a voice of inquiry, "In God?" He answered, "In Jesus." He spoke but once after this. Upon our inquiring how he felt, he said he was "Happy."'

It would seem as if other names in the memories of the saints are like those cut deeply into the poet's fabled rock of ice, which gradually, as the sun came round day by day melting the ice, became less and less plain, till at length they melted away altogether. But it is not so with the name of Jesus. The Psalmist says, 'His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.'¹

¹ Psalm lxxii. 17.

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II. What, then, are the great realities that have given to Jesus a Name that is above every name?

1. We will speak of four of them, and let the first be that of His Redeeming Love. Without Christ the world is spoken of as in a state of slavery, worse than that of the old Egyptian bondage; but through Him men are redeemed and set free, and this is why they come to love Him.

2. The second great reality is His readiness to forgive sins. He is so slow to anger that He bears with our ingratitude and wrongdoing for many years with the kindest patience and long-suffering, but when we repent and turn to Him, He forgives us in a moment.

To the broken and contrite heart the gracious promise has been thousands of times fulfilled: 'Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear,' and for this swift and abundant mercy His people ascribe to Him a Name which is above every name.

3. Another thing for which Christ is so beloved of His people is what is called in Eph. ii. 7, the exceeding riches of His grace, sometimes called 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' These riches Christ freely bestows upon His people.

It is said of a certain Eastern king, who had immense wealth, that once every year, on a set day, he caused a large pair of balances to be brought before him, and himself standing in one scale, had the other filled with gold and silver and precious gifts until the scales were equal, and then scattered the gifts among the multitude. Every day Jesus distributes to His people of His unsearchable riches of grace according to their heart's desire. All the promises of the Word of God are theirs. What a treasure are these alone!

4. The last excellence of Jesus which we shall mention is His 'Power to subdue all things to Himself.' We will close with the following story which illustrates this:—

At a missionary meeting on the island of Raratonga, in the Pacific Ocean, an old man, who wished to join the Church, rose and said, 'I have lived during the reign of four kings. In the first we were continually at war, and a fearful season it was watching and hiding with fear. During the reign of the second we were overtaken with a severe famine, and all expected to perish; then we ate rats and grass and this wood and that wood. During the third we were conquered, and became the peck and prey of the two other settlements of the island; then if a man went to fish he rarely ever returned, or if a woman went far away to fetch food she was rarely ever seen again. But during the reign of this third king we were visited by another King, a great King, a good King, a peaceful King, a King of love, Jesus, the Lord from heaven. He has gained the victory.

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He has conquered our hearts; therefore we now have peace and plenty in this world, and hope soon to dwell with Him in heaven.'

R. BREWIN.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Barabbas or Jesus.

The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. S. MATT. xxvii. 21.

I. LL of life is one great warfare. Every thought, word, and deed is a portion of it. All the history of our whole race, from Adam's fall until our Lord, shall, at His coming, destroy Antichrist with the spirit of His mouth, is one long attempt of the evil one to set up his authority in the place of God's, and to dispute His sovereignty over His creatures. On the one side God offers us His will, that we should will as He wills; and that, since His will is all good, we should find in it our perfection, be like Himself, be His own representatives on earth, 'holy as He is holy,' 'perfect as' He, our 'Heavenly Father, is perfect,' and partake of His goodness, love, peace, purity, truth, sovereignty over ourselves, His assured and abiding unchangeableness, being held fast by Him. On the other side, Satan offers us our own will, to claim to ourselves, out of God, all which God would give us in Himself, a counterfeit, slavish freedom of the will, to have no other lord, to have all from ourselves, power, wisdom, man's respect, pleasures, riches, love, as and how we will, for ourselves, and not from God. On the one hand God offers us His own calm consolations, His secret intercourse with the soul, His peace abiding in it, His own indwelling; on the other, Satan offers us a giddy whirl of passions, corruptible pleasures, excitements, feverish joys, and, alas! he hides from us therewith his own indwelling and mastery. God offers us eternity of bliss, 'pleasures for evermore,' in Him; Satan' so prolongs the present with busy thoughts, and schemes, and anticipations, as to hide from us an eternity of woe with him. All time is one history of this one manifold choice.

II. All, throughout the whole world, is one choice between God and Satan, Christ and Barabbas. We know not indeed what to do; and so, again and again, our Blessed Lord intercedes for those who

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deliver Him to His foes. But whenever a choice is given, if we have but any fear that we are choosing amiss, if we do what we suspect to be wrong or worse, if we say wilfully what we think better unsaid, what do we, in fact, but choose Barabbas? Hence the deep, deadly wound of the first marked childish sin, which lives so long in the memory, and haunts it. It was its first marked choice of evil, and, if so, though unknowingly, of the evil one. Hence the evil of some subtle sin, which it perhaps knows not to be sin, only it knows that, were its parents by, it would not do it. It has made an evil choice; and that choice cleaves to it, perhaps, through years of helpless strife and misery. The first evil choice is the parent of all which follows. It has chosen Satan instead of God; and now, before it can again choose aright, it must undo that first choice, and will that all had been unchosen which it ever chose out of God.

We never can make any real progress in holiness, we can hardly take the very first step, we shall be constantly slipping backwards, until, by God's mercy, we have this stamped upon our souls, that we are ever anew making, that we must in all things make this choice. There is, in every thing, a better and worse, a good and an evil to us. If we choose good, we choose God, who alone is good, and is in all things good; if we choose evil, we do in fact choose the evil one. There are degrees of choice, as there were degrees and steps in the rejection of our Lord. Yet each led on to the next. Each hardens for the next. The character deepens unconsciously; and at last, in man's sight, and but for some mighty interposition of God, it becomes fixed; because it has all along been secretly following or resisting grace, and so choosing God, or rejecting Him. And who knows how much countless, deadly ill, there may not be in these repeated acts of choice? Who, when he looks back on any portion of a past mis-directed life, can imagine the amount of sin through which it became what it was? It seems, and is, well-nigh all sin, because it has not been choosing God for His own sake, and has been choosing self and evil.

There is no safety, but never to think ourselves safe; Lent after Lent to bind ourselves to Him by penitence; Easter after Easter, to beware lest in earthly joy or relaxation we betray Him whom in Lent we sought; morning by morning, to make Him anew, our deeper, only choice, and pray Him to knit it fast unto Himself; evening by evening, quickly to amend by prayer for pardon and grace and more earnest purpose, if in aught, through human infirmity, we have chosen amiss.

E. B. PUSEY.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Testing of Pilate.

I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be upon us, and on our children. S. MAT. xxvii. 24, 25.

THIS day, which we call Palm Sunday, is like no other day in the Christian year, no other day in the life of Christ. It occupies that pathetic void which forms so marked a separation between the two parts of the Oratorio of the *Messiah*. The people shouted for joy that the great miracle-worker had come at the holy season to the holy city to take, as in their gathering enthusiasm they believed, His place as the divine king under whom they were to rule the world. The rulers of the people learned from the people's rejoicings and the people's cries that there was for them but one course—the object of the people's joyous clamour must die. This day is the meeting together, the overlapping of these two strains of feeling, diametrically opposite, the strain of triumph and the strain of death, of apparent and of real victory. And if we ask how He regarded this day, He in whose honour the palms were strewn, He for whose death the rulers were preparing themselves, if we ask this, hear the answer which the Holy Scriptures give: 'When He was come near He saw the city, and wept over it, saying, Oh that thou hadst known!' The words of my text take us to a like critical point, to the details of the great tragedy itself.

It was the crisis in the life of Pilate, the crisis in the life of the Jewish nation, and the Divine Son of God vouchsafed it to be the crisis of His life on earth. Of these let us confine ourselves, so far as we may, to the first; but ever with this accompaniment in our hearts—that while we speak of the judge and glance at the accusers, we never cease to feel the conscious presence of Him whose fate, as they believed, they were deciding, whose fate, so far as their responsibility went, they were in fact deciding. That presence must be with us, chastening, hallowing our thoughts. At each stage He must be with us: from the first when He was led to Pilate's house as a lamb to the slaughter—*Ecce Agnus Dei!* to the last when Pilate led Him forth—*Ecce Homo!* With Pilate, as indeed with the Jews, our text strictly describes the crisis. It takes him up to the supreme moment, and leaves him nothing but inevitable action to follow. The critics of art tell us that this is precisely the conjecture which a great statue should represent. You see the man in motionless marble; and to represent him in motion would be in error. You see him poised the instant before motion, his body bent forward, his muscles set, his hand holding the discus, thrown back to the exact position it ought

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to occupy if the tremendous effort is not to fail of its effect; and exactly at that moment of supreme preparation, the instant before the sweeping rush of the arm is to begin, the sculptor leaves him—leaves him for so many thousands of years as the marble shall last. You see the father and the sons writhing in agony, their limbs constricted by the monsters which the sea has given to wreak the vengeance of a goddess; you see them at the moment when the father, having tried all his powers to save his children and himself, having tried and striven as a man may in silence, has at last opened his mouth for one despairing cry, and there the moment before the cry is uttered, there he is left. In each case the imagination is driven to give the motion, to hear the cry. Just at such a moment as that of my text, Pilate washes his hands of the blood of this innocent person, the Jews take the blood on themselves and on their children. It is the supreme moment of the preparation; after it, all follows of necessity.

I. There is, I think, no episode in the life of any mortal man which has the characteristics that mark this history of a day in the life of a Roman governor. That is, of course, a truism if we regard the nature of that on which he had to give the final judgment; but I mean so far as the several steps of his action are concerned apart from the divine element which renders this great trial unlike all other trials. We see the man with his inner mind revealed by his action; we see him striving from first to last, now by one promising method, now by another, to avert the inevitable, to persuade the Jews to abandon their set determination, to persuade some one else to take the responsibility of the decision, to persuade himself that by a symbolic act and by an authoritative declaration he could purge himself from responsibility, to persuade the silent victim to help him, the judge, to escape; to help him either by a confession which should end his scruples, or by such a declaration as might nerve the judge to make some real, some crowning effort to save Him. And we see Pilate, with all his power as Cæsar's representative—the representative of the master of the world—we see him in the hands of a body of determined men—men who knew exactly what they wanted, and were perfectly ruthless in their determination to secure Him, perfectly unscrupulous as to the means of attainment. We see them making their position more and more secure with each effort, each fresh concession of the Roman governor, showing their hand only so far as was necessary for the special stage at which they found themselves, holding in reserve the final argument and irresistible appeal to the personal interests, to the personal fear of their ruler, using it only at the last awful moment, and using it with crushing effect. Quite apart from that which is at stake, it is a terrible picture of a man, by no means all bad, driven by bold, bad men to do a dreadful deed, a deed

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from which his heart and his conscience and his honour each in turn recoil, a deed which has made the name of Pontius Pilate stand out in lurid letters as no other name ever named among men stands out, as no other name ever can stand out. It was not, you must notice, the first or the second time that Pilate had been defeated in the attempt to carry out his will by the determination of the Jews. He knew well what they were. His was the famous order which sent into the Holy City the standards of the Roman soldiers with the desecrating image of the Emperor, and after one device and another had failed, after he had tried persuasion, and had tried the threat and the show of violence, they made him withdraw the order. He it was who hung up in the palace of the Roman governor shields inscribed with the names of the Roman deities; but here, great as was the outrage to the Jews, he remained firm, and had to bear the indignity of a special order from Tiberius to remove them. In both of these cases he was wrong from the first and throughout, and he had to give way; in the one case to submit, in the other, in the case which fills our thoughts to-day, he strove to do what was right, and he had to give way, as before. It was a terrible warning to a weak man in a place of responsibility.

II. The washing of his hands was the closing scene of the striving for the mastery; it was the last supreme moment in Pilate's possibility of doing right, and he so used it as to make that which had been possible thenceforth impossible. There were, as you know, further struggles on Pilate's part, but he had foredoomed them to failure. The punishment of scourging which he had offered as a compromise preceded the punishment of crucifixion. When this, which they had rejected as a compromise, had been inflicted, Pilate showed them the sight to us so terrible in imagination, so awful in realisation, to us so far beyond the force and propriety of words; to them so vastly short of their desire. He appealed to them, Was not that enough? Would not that suffice? 'No,' they shouted, 'He must die, for He made Himself the Son of God.' Pilate feared greatly when he heard this, feared instinctively, and his instinct was right. He interposed yet another delay that he might learn what this crime was of a man that He made Himself the Son of God. Some deep interest he saw that there was, he saw that there must be. What was there behind the words that stirred the keen-eyed rulers of the people to frenzy? What was there behind the words that for them a man so patient as this—what was there behind the words that for them a man, and this man, should die? He learned that which, all too late as it was, drove him to yet another attempt. But the Jews had worsted him every time, and now that their grasp was actually on the accomplishment of their purpose they would wait no

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longer. They used their last and strongest weapon—‘If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend.’ Thereupon he gave way for the last time. He brought forth at once the prisoner, and with the last cry, ‘Will ye crucify your King?’ he delivered Him unto them to be crucified. The one remaining question between Pilate and the Jews was decided the other way. In regard to it Pilate stood firm, and the Jews acquiesced in it. It is the most terrible irony in the whole of history. He had yielded at every point in his effort to save an innocent man from judicial murder. He could stand firm in the matter of a word on a piece of parchment; he could wear the air, could use the language of a strong man when he left the regions of the infinitely great and descended to that which, though of great import in itself, was in comparison but infinitely little. ‘You have compelled me to send an innocent man to death; what I have been made to do I have done; but now I stand firm. Alter the title that is to be set up over his head I will not; what I have written I have written.’ We should bear in mind carefully—the fact, in judging Pilate’s conduct, that we have no right to assign to him the guilt of any conscious disregard of the claims of the Incarnate Son of God. I cannot think that it is in any such spirit as that that his name is placed in our creeds, though the effect of it is to hand it down to the most distant generations in the most terrible connection that can be imagined. We do not recite the name of Judas Iscariot, the name of the high priest; we make no reference to the false accusations on which our Lord was put to death. We ought, I think, to regard the mention of Pilate’s name in the Creed as an accurate historical statement, and a matter of which it is of the very last importance that there should be complete historical accuracy.

III. And it is right that Pilate’s name should be placed there, and not the name of the Emperor Tiberius, for the actual responsibility for the judicial murder lay with Pilate, and not with the distant Emperor. We must remember, too, that life was held of but little account in those days. There was not any sense at all of that which is so marked a feature in our day—the horror of taking the life of a man in what we call cold blood. But, indeed, we need not go back to Pilate’s time for the absence of that sense. The history of the judicial murders of nobles and of statesmen in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is enough to show us that we cannot in such matters judge the past by the present, shrink as we may and ought to shrink from the merciless cruelty of the past. But after all, from one point of view, this only emphasises the lesson which Pilate’s conduct has for all who hold a responsible position. Their want of firmness to stand by what they know to be right is something far-

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reaching in its effects, far beyond all proportion to the seeming importance or unimportance of that which they have to decide. For a man in a responsible position to let things drift, to let those have their way who press him most, to know what is right, and yet to do what is wrong—that, however much he would resent and repudiate the imputation—that is the way in which, in this nineteenth century, a man in such a position can act as Pilate acted.

When sin is in question it is possible to play the part of Pilate, and at the same time and thereby to earn the self-invoked and terrible penalty of the Jews: ‘His blood be upon us.’ For, indeed, when we dwell in thought upon the sufferings of our blessed Lord in this terrible week upon which we have entered, we that feel and know why those sufferings were undertaken, for what and for whom they were undergone, when we look to the world around us and see it revelling in carelessness and sin, when we look to the world within us and frankly recognise what there we see in us which has been washed clean of original sin in baptism, enlightened by God the Holy Ghost in confirmation, strengthened by God the Son in communion, then we do indeed feel with overwhelming force that the closing words of one of the most terrible passages of Holy Scripture are not too highly wrought. Those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the world to come, if they shall fall away they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.

CANON G. F. BROWNE.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Seven Gethsemane Commands.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. S. MATT. xxvi. 36.

I. IRST, ‘Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder’ (ver. 36). The Master would bid us here remember that there is something in His sufferings into which we cannot enter. For three years He had been training these twelve disciples. But now He seems to say to them all, ‘Thou canst not follow Me now. Ye are they which have continued with Me in my temptations; but now I must go forward alone. Hitherto, but no further. “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.”’

II. The second command is in ver. 38: ‘Tarry ye here, and watch

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with Me.' Yes, though there are depths in the sufferings of Christ which we cannot understand, and which we must be content not to understand, yet we are to watch with Him. Let us learn, first, the reality of the manhood of Jesus Christ; that He is very man as He is very God; that He felt intensely all those sorrows through which He passed; that He was touched by the feeling of our infirmities. In the second place, learn the intolerable character of sin. See how the pure and holy Jesus shrank from being made sin for us—He who knew no sin. And, thirdly, let us learn the matchless love of Christ, who endured so much for our sakes, and laid down His life for us.

III. The next three commands concern more especially the great subject of temptation. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Watch, as if everything depended upon you; pray, for everything depends upon God. 'Watch and pray.' Pray, for watching without prayer is presumption; watch, for praying without watching is hypocrisy. 'Watch and pray.' Watch against the foe without, and pray in the secret of your heart for power from on high.

IV. The fourth command is in verse 45, when He returned the third time, and found them still fast asleep. Now He said unto them, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.' Sleep on now, for opportunities past can now never be recalled. Of all the words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ during that awful night, there are few which come home to us with more humiliating power. Their very irony wings the shaft; at the same time, the remonstrance is so gentle and so kind.

V. 'Rise, let us be going.' Yes! though the past can never be recalled. Fresh opportunities should rouse us to fresh efforts. Thank God, there is another chance. We may be humbled by the past; we should lament it and confess it; but let it not paralyse us for the future. Let it only be a fresh incentive to work while it is day, and serve whilst yet we may.

VI. The sixth command, in verse 52, teaches us submission to the divine will, and the abandoning of all human power. 'Put up again thy sword into his place.' *Non tali auxilio.* When we draw the carnal sword we always strike off a servant's ear.

VII. The last command you will find in John xviii. 8: 'If ye seek Me, let these go their way.' It was spoken in the first place, not to the disciples, but to the representatives of the law who had come to arrest Him. It speaks to us first of all most powerfully of the voluntariness of the death of Jesus Christ. No man took His life from Him. He had power to lay it down, and He had power to take it again. He gave Himself for us. You may hear Him say, not merely

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to the soldiers of the high priests, but to the Law of God, and to the executioners of Divine wrath, 'If ye seek Me, let these go their way'; and so He became our Surety and our Substitute, and we are sheltered by His surrender of Himself to death.

G. A. STUART.

Watchfulness.

Then cometh He to His disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. S. MATTHEW xxvi. 45.

I. **H**UMAN life is not inaptly represented by that night of woe. Here one patient and careful soul is found constantly on the watch, and ever engaged in prayerful communion with God. There the mass of men, though beset by the same dangers, and the same temptations, are asleep; ignorant or unmindful of their position, they take their chance of the course they will pursue, or of the behaviour they will adopt, when they feel the stress of the inevitable storm. There is no look-out kept, no defence set up, no refuge provided against the moment the actual trial arrives. If it were not so, should we see the total want of preparation, the state of helplessness and desolation, which we so often encounter when men are called upon to confront the ordinary difficulties of life, when sickness suddenly overtakes us, or some unlooked-for trouble. We are taken by surprise; we are laid low and utterly crushed, by the force of some unexpected sorrow. From every side of life is constantly repeated in our ears the command of our one wise and faithful Friend and Master, 'Watch and pray.' We do not lack warning. No; what we lack is the spirit of watchfulness and of prayer. We are asleep in the midst of thickly-besetting troubles; we are dull of hearing to the cry of past experience, which some time or other penetrates the innermost recesses of every home in the land. It is no wonder if we cannot, or rather will not, watch with Christ; still less that we cannot suffer with Him, when called on to take up the Cross and walk with Him.

II. Our Master watched and prayed; the pure and sinless Christ watched; He who could challenge the world to convict Him of sin watched. He found it necessary to pray throughout the long hours of a weary night, not against sin, but simply for strength to complete a work He had set Himself to do, and against which every feeling of Nature was innocently arrayed. His temptation, treating it from a human side, to avoid disgrace and agony, was, as we should consider it, a very natural and a very harmless desire. But agonising as the tortures of the Cross were to His contemplation,

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the agony of an uncompleted duty was greater ; and so He prayed for strength to bear the Cross and to complete His sacrifice for sinners. How much more need have we to watch and pray, drawn as we are by every instinct, every inclination, and every sense towards self-indulgence ; beset as we are by innumerable temptations, which throng so thickly around us, which arise when we least expect them, often wearing the false disguises of grace and goodness. And when I say 'watch and pray,' I do not mean that we need to be constantly on our knees, for this may be but the letter of prayer which kills. It is the spirit of prayer and of watchfulness which really gives us life and protection in the midst of a deluding and disturbing world, and without that we should never live an hour of our lives.

III. But there was yet something more which called for watchfulness and prayer in the disciples of our Lord. They had been selected to pass with Him the hours of sorrow, and to watch with Him in His anguish. At no other time probably had they ever enjoyed such an opportunity of actually sustaining and cheering the spirit of their agonised Lord. Many a night had been spent with Him, but never before such a night of sorrow. He had been everything to them ; now they were invited to be a support to His downcast soul. What an opportunity for them was veiled under the simple invitation to watch with Him ! They were invited to stand in the same rank, and by His side, in the personal struggle which was torturing the heart of the Son of God. Again and again He endeavoured to rouse them to a sense of His want, and of their opportunity ; but the effort was of no avail. The opportunity was offered, but now was lost. The time is gone by, the necessity is passed. 'Sleep on now, and take your rest. I might have been cheered by your presence, your sympathy might have consoled Me ; but I have trodden the wine-press alone. I am now prepared to take the cup, and to drink it to the dregs. The hour of prayer is over, and strength for action is come. Rise, and let us be going ; behold ! he is at hand that betrayeth Me.'

Opportunities lie before us all. We must wilfully close our eyes not to see them. An opportunity lost is a message from God unheeded ; and there comes a day when we have our last trial here, when Christ will no longer urge us to activity and to exertion, but will address us in other words—words which carry with them a bitter rebuke : 'Sleep on now and take your rest.'

G. PROTHERO.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Judas.

It had been good for that man if he had not been born. S. MATT. xxvi. 24.

PALM SUNDAY, as it brings before us our Lord's solemn entry into Jerusalem before His last Passover, suggests a great many subjects for reflection, but none that is more entitled to our attention than the great variety of characters who may be joined, apparently with an absolute unity of purpose, in the services or the devotions which are appropriate to a great religious occasion. The narratives of the entry into Jerusalem distinguish between the parts taken, by the disciples on the one hand, and by the general population on the other; but all co-operated to promote a common purpose, namely, the glory of the Son of David, at His solemn approach to the Holy City. The conduct of the multitude has often been pointed to as an illustration of the fickleness of popular opinion. The men who to-day cried: 'Hosanna! to the Son of David,' would be shouting some five days hence: 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' But the disciples, who could claim a larger knowledge and a nearer intimacy, who thronged around their Master as His immediate attendants or body-guard — are they altogether secure from any such infirmity, or vacillation of judgment or purpose? Was there no risk lest any of them should exchange the mood of an apparent loyalty and devotion for a different attitude towards their Master when the hour of trial should come? We know how that question must be answered. The time was not far distant when Christ's first apostle denied Him, when, at any rate for a moment, all the disciples forsook Him and fled, when, of the chosen twelve, only one in the hour of danger stood near his Master's Cross of shame. The fear of man, and the fear of pain and death will account for the weakness of our Lord's first followers; but these motives would not account for a more startling failure of loyalty which was to be witnessed in the circle that immediately surrounded Him. Side by side with John, who was to stand beneath the Cross, side by side with Peter, who, after denying his Master, would repent with bitter tears, side by side with Andrew, and James the Greater and James the Less, and Thomas, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Philip, and Simon and Juda, there was another who, with them, had walked up the long steep road from Jericho, with them had witnessed the miracle whereby Lazarus was raised from the dead at Bethany, and who now, no doubt, waved his palm-branch and chanted his 'Hosanna!' like the rest; still a member of the apostolic college, still in closest intimacy with the Divine Redeemer, but already within three days of the betrayal, there walked and sang in that solemn procession, as it approached

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Jerusalem, Judas Iscariot. 'It had been good for that man if he had not been born.'

It has been observed that our Lord Himself says the sternest, as well as the most tender things that are recorded in the Gospel. He would not bequeath to a disciple the responsibility or the odium of proclaiming truths against which human nature will always rebel. He did not leave it to an apostle to announce the doom of unrepented sin, and He described the moral characteristics of populations of men, of classes who came before Him during his ministry, in terms more or less severe. Chorazin and Bethsaida, though on the sacred soil of Palestine, were, He said, in a worse case than the Pagan cities of Tyre and Sidon. Capernaum, though it was exalted to Heaven, would be cast down to hell. The Scribes and Pharisees, though they sat in the seat of Moses, were 'fools,' 'hypocrites,' 'whited sepulchres;' Herod, on his throne, was yet a 'fox.' But nothing that our Lord ever said of any class of men, of any one human being, approached in its severity to His saying about Judas. They were sitting—He and the disciples—at the Paschal meal as the twilight was deepening towards the night. They ate almost in silence. Scarce a word was spoken that was not necessary to the ceremony. Suddenly He broke in on the silence with a saying which carried dismay into the hearts of all present: 'One of you shall betray Me.' Each, even the most sincere, must have feared lest he should be capable of committing the unparalleled sin; each for a moment was to feel his liability to commit a crime of which another man might be guilty; each, by his question, 'Lord, is it I?' implied all his consciousness of innocence. And then our Lord proceeded to declare solemnly His approaching self-sacrifice, and the agency by which it would be brought about—'He answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.' And 'then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto them, Thou hast said.'

Concerning no other human being is so stern an utterance, on Divine authority, placed on record. It cannot be explained, against the whole drift of the passage, as though our Lord meant that it would have been good for Himself if Judas had not been born; nor yet as a proverbial saying which should not be taken too literally, since this is to mistake the profound seriousness of purpose with which our Lord used the gift of human speech. Nor does it merely predict that Judas, like such servants of God as Jeremiah or Job, would, in a moment of transient despondency, curse the day of his birth, since Jesus Himself confirms and utters this judgment on

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the despairing Judas. It is the Most Merciful Himself who says, 'It were good for that man if he had not been born.' As we think over the piercing words we see how they close for ever the door of hope, since, if in some remotely distant age there were in store for Judas the restoration of his being to life and peace, beyond that restoration there would still be for him an eternity, and the balance of good would at once preponderate immeasurably on the side of having been born. It must be good for every human being to thank God for his creation, for the opportunity of knowing and loving the great Author of his existence, unless such love, such knowledge, has been made by his own act for ever impossible.

I. Now, first of all, observe that there are sayings about Judas which might seem to imply that his part in life was forced on him by some inexorable destiny. S. John says that 'Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray Him.' Our Lord asked the assembled Apostles: 'Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' In His great intercession He addressed the Father: 'Them that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost save the son of perdition.' And, at the election of Matthias, S. Peter points to the destiny of Judas as marked out in prophecy: 'His bishopric let another take,' and He speaks of Judas as having 'gone to his own place.' This, and other language of the kind, has been understood to represent Judas as unable to avoid his part as the betrayer, and the sympathy and compassion which is thus created for him is likely to blind us to a true view of his unhappy career. The truth is, that at different times the Bible looks at human life from two very different, and, indeed, opposite points of view. Sometimes it regards men merely as factors in the Divine plan for governing the world, for bringing about results determined in the Divine counsels; and when this is the case it speaks of them as though they had no personal choice or control of their destinies, and were only counters, or instruments, in the hand of the mighty Ruler of the Universe. At other times Holy Scripture regards men as free agents, endowed with a choice between truth and error, between right and wrong, between a higher and lower line of conduct; and then it enables us to trace the connection between the use which a man makes of his opportunities and his final destiny. Both ways of looking at life are, of course, strictly accurate. On the one hand, it belongs to the sovereignty of the Almighty and Eternal Being, that we, His creatures, should be but tools in His hands; on the other, it befits His justice that no moral being, on his probation, should suffer eternal loss save through his own act and choice. The language of Scripture about Pharaoh illustrates the two points of view. At one time we are told that 'the Lord hardened Pharaoh's

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heart' that he could not let the children of Israel go, and at another, that 'Pharaoh hardened his own heart.' The same fact is looked at, first from the point of view of what was needed in order to bring about the deliverance of Israel, and next from the point of view of Pharaoh's personal responsibility. S. Paul stands at one point of view in the ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and at the other in the twelfth chapter of the same Epistle. It is no doubt difficult, if not impossible, with our present limited range of knowledge, to reconcile the Divine sovereignty in the moral world with the moral freedom of each individual man. Some of the great mistakes in theology are due to an impatience of this difficulty. Calvin would sacrifice man's freedom to the sovereignty of God, and Arminius would sacrifice God's sovereignty to the assertion of man's freedom. We cannot hope, here and now, to discover the formula which conciliates the two parallel lines of truth which meet somewhere in the infinite, beyond our point of view, but we must hold to each separately, in spite of the apparent contradiction. If our Lord, looking down upon our life with His Divine intelligence, speaks of Judas once and again as an instrument who would contribute to the working out of the redemption of the world, the Gospel history also supplies us with materials which go to show that Judas had his freedom of choice, his opportunities, his warnings, and that he became the betrayer because he chose to do so.

II. For Judas's career illustrates, secondly, the power of a single passion to enwrap, enchain, possess, degrade a man's whole character. The Christian poet of our day contrasts the bliss of the mother of the Redeemer with the sad lot of the mother of Judas.

'Sure as to blessed Mary come
The saints and martyr-host,
To own with many a thankful strain
The channel of undying bliss,
The bosom where the Lord hath lain,
The hand once held by His ;
Sure on her form for evermore
The glory and the joy she wore,
That robed her bending to adore
The Babe her chaste womb bore,
So surely throes unblest'd have been,
And cradles where no kindly star
Looked down, no angel's eye serene
To gleam thro' years afar.'

And then he tells us how

' Christ's mother mild
Upon that bosom pitying thought
Where Judas lay, a harmless child,
By gold as yet unbought.'

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Judas, we must suppose, had his good points, or he never would have become by his own act a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was not in the position of those of us who are born of Christian parents, and who are made members of Christ in their infancy without being consulted. He chose to follow our Lord when to follow Him implied no gain or credit, and, at least, some risk of unpopularity and danger. And this would seem to show that he must have had some eye, or capacity, for understanding excellence, that he must have had some pleasure in associating with the good, that he cannot, at any rate at one time of his life, have been wanting altogether in moral courage, in self-denial, in a spirit of enterprise for public religious objects. But Judas had one vice or passion, the love of money, carried to a point which filled his thoughts and controlled the action of his will. When this propensity first showed itself we do not know. The germ of it may have been already lodged in his soul when he first left his home to follow the Prophet of Nazareth. Certainly he had at first no opportunities whatever for indulging it. Those great operations of modern finance by which thousands or millions of money are transferred from hand to hand, or from one firm to another, never, it need not be said, flitted before the imagination of this Galilean peasant. Nay, when he first became an apostle, the rules under which the twelve set to work forbade their providing gold, or silver, or brass, in their purses, or scrip for their journey. At a somewhat later period when our Lord was joined by Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna and others who ministered to him of their substance, a common fund would seem to have been formed, and either because he was supposed to have a natural aptitude for the work, or because he desired it, Judas became the treasurer—he had the bag. That bag contained, probably at the most, a few of the small copper coins that were struck by the Roman Procurators or by the Herods. But the magnitude of any passion in the human soul is altogether independent of the limits of its opportunity for indulgence. Tyranny is as possible in a cottage as on an Eastern throne, though it may have to content itself with very restricted gratification. Envy, pride, sensuality, maliciousness, though they may be gratified on a vast area, and with terrific results to others—to millions of others—or within the narrowest limits of a very humble lot, are, as passions, in the one case what they are in the other—powers that overshadow, and that gradually absorb all else in the soul, and give it throughout the impress and the colour of their own malignity, just as there are bodily diseases which, at first unobtrusive and unnoticed, and capable of being extirpated if taken in time, will spread and grow until first one and then another limb or organ is weakened or infected by them, so that at last the whole body is but a habitation for the

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disease which is hurrying it to the grave. So, in the moral world, one unresisted propensity to known wrong may in time acquire a tyrannical ascendancy that will make almost any conceivable crime possible in order to gratify it. It is a neglect of this truth—a truth which may be verified by a very little observation of human nature, that has led some modern writers to attempt a revision of the account of the character of Judas which is set before us in the Gospel. These writers think that that account does not explain so tremendous a fall, that the real reasons for it must have been graver, or more numerous, or more complex, that it was profound insincerity from the very first, or envy of his colleagues, or envy of the moral superiority of Jesus, or resentment secretly cherished for some warning or rebuke, or fancied neglect, or even a surviving attachment to the Jewish priesthood, to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the orders of men who were prominent in the old religious life of the country, and whom our Lord had at times rebuked with marked severity. If it was so, it must be a matter of conjecture. Holy Scripture does not say so. If it was so we may be sure that the ruling passion gradually absorbed these other motives into itself, drew them up, assimilated them with itself, like the raw levies of subject states which a conqueror incorporates with his own disciplined forces. Judas was at bottom and before all things a man who cared for money more than he cared for conscience, more than he cared for virtue, more than he cared for God; and it was this fatal propensity which, with or without other contributory causes, at any rate in the first instance, determined his ruin. We see this motive in its full energy when Mary anointed our Lord's feet at Bethany. Judas could see in her action no ray of the love which made it so beautiful; he had only one thought—the money-worth of the box of ointment. It might have been sold, he said, for three hundred silver pence, and given to the poor. Covetousness will often give itself the airs of a far-sighted philanthropy which protests against the waste of money on what it describes as 'mere sentiment.' Our Lord did not note the fact that Judas was dishonest, and would have had the price of the ointment in his keeping if it had been sold; He only observed that Judas would have other opportunities for befriending the poor, and that Mary had used her one opportunity of doing honour to Him at His burial by anticipation. But Judas understood the rebuke, and no doubt it may have quickened the determination he had already formed. If he could not have the three hundred silver *denarii*, he at least might have thirty shekels of silver, about one-fifth of it, and his revenge for the scene at Bethany into the bargain.

III. And, thirdly, the history of Judas shows us that great religious privileges do not of themselves secure men against utter

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spiritual ruin. It would, of course, be ungrateful to God to deny that such privileges may and should further our highest interests, but religious privileges only do their intended work when they are responded to on our part by the dispositions which make the most of them—by sincerity of purpose, by a humble, that is to say, a true estimate of self, by sorrow for past sin, by watchfulness over present conduct, by an especial care not to let any one person acquire that preponderant and supreme place in the soul which may render all helps to holiness useless, which may forfeit all prospect of eternal peace. What religious opportunities could have been greater than those which were enjoyed by Judas Iscariot? He was one of those twelve men who were most closely associated with the Redeemer of the world during His ministry; he was admitted to an intimacy which was denied to those of our Lord's first cousins—'brethren,' as they are called—who were not already Apostles; nay, which, when His ministry had once begun, was denied to His blessed Mother herself. Judas shared a companionship, compared with which the purest, the noblest intimacies that earth has known, were worthless and degrading. He heard the very words, he witnessed the very works which are recorded in the Gospels; he heard and witnessed many more than these, which have not been recorded. He received into his understanding and his memory, if not within his heart, the impress of that one incomparable life revealing itself insensibly, incessantly, by a thousand rays of charity and wisdom playing all around it. How often may we not have heard men say: 'If I had not to live among the degenerate and inconsistent Christians whom I see around me, if I had lived eighteen hundred years ago with Jesus of Nazareth in His own Galilee, I should be a better man than I am.' But is it more certain that this would be so, than that the brethren of Dives, who heard not Moses and the prophets, would have been persuaded by one rising from the dead? If anything could have roused a man to a sense of moral danger, we might think that the teaching of Jesus Christ to which Judas listened would surely have done so. Judas must have heard our Lord's warnings about the gift of unfaithfulness in the unrighteous Mammon. Judas would have listened to the parable of the sower and the explanation how the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choked the word of truth in the soil of the soul. Judas may well have thought that the saying, 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon,' or the proverb, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven,' were meant especially for him. Judas was even one of those who asked the question with regard to this proverb, 'Who, then, can be saved?' The very greatest religious advantages did not compel the understanding to be sincere or the

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conscience to be sensitive, or the affections to be warm and quick, or the will to be straightforward and vigorous. H. P. LIDDON.

Sins of Believers.

Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled. S. MATTHEW xxvi. 56.

I. **O**F all the things which Christ had to try Him, in His sad sojourn, the conduct of His disciples must have been the sorest. It is not what meets us in the outer circle, which leaves the scars of life; it is the misunderstandings, the want of sympathy, the disrespect, the unfaithfulness, the stabs of those with whom we stood in the tenderest relationship. Those make the bitternesses. 'What are these wounds in Thine hands? Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.'

And you must remember that never, from the beginning of His ministry to the end, did His disciples really understand one word which Jesus said. From the first to the last, He was speaking of a spiritual kingdom, while they were always thinking of a temporal one. Neither had they the least idea of the real nature, or the poignancy, or the dignity, or the object of His sufferings. And therefore they were always endeavouring to stop them.

They loved Him dearly. They loved Him as a man; they loved Him as God. They did not love His mission, because they did not know it. Their words were, therefore, always irrelevant, and beside the mark; and their actions were always thwarting. While His love to them was the loftiest and the wisest, theirs to Him was generally foolish and weak; while His was perfectly constant, theirs was capricious.

And they could go away, and they could leave Him, who never left them! So that, in the centre of His most intimate friendships, Christ was an isolated man. The nearest and the dearest were nothing. Notwithstanding all His disciples, He was alone!

If you have ever known the bitterness of a companionship which was never congenial, and often untrue, you can estimate the trial!

But, were they responsible? Might they have better read Christ's work and mind? Certainly. Not as they could after Pentecost; but, to a great degree. Else, Christ would not have said, so touchingly, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?' He would not have called them 'fools,'—He would not have 'reproved' them,—as He did.

II. Now, there is a plain, broad distinction in the way in which Christ treated the sins of His disciples, which it is right we should always recognise. To the sins which were personal to Himself, He was lenient and forgiving. He puts on them the kindest construc-

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tion: He scarcely sees them. To the offences, that is, the stumbling-blocks in the way of Himself, or of the truth,—to anything which would bar His onward path, or hinder His work, or give a wrong impression of the character of His religion,—to those He was uncompromisingly short and sharp!

The ground of that distinction is as instructive as it is clear. He was angry only with what interfered with the happiness which He came to set up in our world, for that disglorified the Father! But self was nowhere.

In His most trying hour, 'all His disciples,' who had professed so much, who had been warned so lovingly, 'forsook Him and fled!' And what is Christ's revenge? He stood, in all His resurrection-power, and this is His message to them: 'Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My Father, and to your Father; to My God, and to your God!'

Such was Christ to the sins of His disciples committed against Himself.

See the lesson. Love, defend, be earnest, for truth. Put self always in the shade.

J. VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Crying Children.

(*Children's Sermon.*)

Children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David.

S. MATTHEW XXI. 15.

L  HO were these children? One or two of our best scholars, observing that they are spoken of as 'the children in the temple,' and not simply as any children, and that their shout took the form of a song, suppose that these crying, or chanting, children were the little chorister boys who sang the psalms in the temple every day. But I am not sure of that, though it is a very pretty thought. For I have observed that all children, when they join in a shout, and repeat it often, fall into a kind of song or chant. They need not be choristers to do that.

I can quite believe, then, that not only choristers, but any children who were in the temple at Jerusalem when Jesus wrought His miracles of healing, if they began to cry out 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' would soon slip into a rude chant, since all deep emotion easily rises

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into song, and would pipe it out with immense pleasure—at least to themselves. To shout and sing is a natural relief to the excited and overcharged heart.

II. But we must look into the words of the song they sang if I am to show you why I think these children crying in the temple are worthy of your imitation, and why we should all be glad to hear you crying in the same strain.

Some of you would be very much surprised to hear, no doubt, that you all know a little Hebrew. Yet even the youngest of you have learned to say, or sing, Hallelujah and Hosanna, and these are both Hebrew words. Perhaps, however, you do not always remember their meaning when you use them. But most of you must know that 'Halleluja' means 'Praise to the Lord,' and that 'Hosanna' is, as a quaint old scholar says, 'a kind of holy Hurrah.' In itself 'Hosanna,' as a prayer, means 'Save, we beseech Thee,' and, as an exclamation, 'O save!' But just as we ourselves, when we feel very patriotic, sing 'God save the Queen,' without thinking much about the Queen herself, and not always remembering that we are praying to the Almighty; just as the French salute any famous conqueror, or statesman, or popular favourite, with 'Vive!' and the Italians shout out their 'Vivas,' not pausing to think that they are invoking life on the man whom they delight to honour; so the Jews came to use the word Hosanna simply as an exclamation of joy and wonder and thankfulness.

III. The children were right after all,—not the wise Rabbis, nor the surly frowning Pharisees, as we know very well now. Time has justified them, and the history of mankind. Jesus was the Saviour. It was but meet that they should make merry and be glad over a world that had been lost but was found, that had been dead but was alive again.

Nay, the children are always right, so long as they keep the childlike heart. Or why are we taught that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God builds a stronghold for weary men? Why did Jesus Himself declare that the things of His kingdom, hidden from the wise and prudent, are revealed to babes; and that only as we become like a little child can we enter the kingdom of heaven? Why did the great Apostle affirm that not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but those whom the world despises as weak and silly?

If you have what you yourselves know to be a really childlike spirit, a spirit sensitive to the touch of every pure and high emotion, then we who speak to you of Christ can make our appeal to you without fear. We are quite sure that, as soon as in any measure you see Him as He is, you will greet Him with your Hosannas, because you will feel that He is the very Saviour who meets all your

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needs, and in whom you can delight. For no man was ever of so childlike a spirit, no man ever showed so much 'love, and grace, and tenderness,' as He who claims all children, and all men, for Himself. We cannot take you into the temple, indeed, and let you see Him heal the blind and the lame. But we can tell you the story of His life; we can show you how pure He was, how good, how kind, how utterly generous and unselfish, how graciously and tenderly He gave Himself up for us all. And we are sure that, as you listen, all that is really childlike in you will go out to meet Him and to rejoice in Him.

S. COX.

By the Cross.

By the Cross. S. JOHN XIX. 25.

THIS week, the Church summons us all to stand by this Cross. This is the festival of the Atonement, as next Sunday will be the festival of the Resurrection, and we are asked, men and women, and our children, to stand with these holy women of old at the foot of the Cross. And every prayer, every care, every wish, every word, every sin, every sorrow, we may breathe at the foot of the Cross. We will offer our prayer for Him who hung upon it, and we will say, as we look on Him: 'Thy kingdom come.' Do we think of those words when we so often repeat them in the services of our Church, or in our home, or with our own lips alone: 'Thy kingdom come?' for when that kingdom shall have come into men's hearts, 'then shall Christ see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.' We will offer prayer for ourselves each one of us: 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom,' because there is only one salvation for us all, there is only one way for the king and the beggar, for the purple and the rags, for the vilest and the purest, for the best of us and the worst. So we will all breathe the same prayer at the Cross; and we will pray for others. Never let us forget to pray for others. We will pray for those who do not yet pray for themselves, but we tell them that the day is coming when they will have to pray for themselves: we will pray for the careless, we will pray for the Christless, we will pray for those who have never yet thought of their soul, for the sick who cannot be with us to-night, that the sorrowing that are in their homes may be comforted, for the sceptic who cannot believe, for the infidel who will not believe. But is this too large a prayer? Is it too much for us to pray for all these? What! when Christ who hung upon that Cross said before He ever reached it: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' Lord, Thou hast been lifted up upon that Cross, then draw us all unto Thyself, that all may be convinced, and won, and rescued, and redeemed! And hear the cry

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of our Litany: 'By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy Cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us!'

But why is this called the Cross, *the* Cross? Is not our world a world of crosses? Have we not all our crosses to bear? Is not our cross *the* cross to each one of us? Some of you here may have a lighter cross, some of you a very heavy cross, but whatever be the cross it is *the* cross to you and to me. Then why is this *the* Cross? Why is this singled out? for there were three crosses there. Why is this rugged one in the centre singled out to be *the* Cross in all the world? This little emphasis, this little monosyllable, is the key to that which we commemorate in all this great festival of the Atonement that Christ made. This is not a man only that is dying, it is not a martyr only that is dying, it is not an angel only that is dying—it is the God-Man, Christ Jesus, who hangs upon that Cross.

II. And remember, when we are pointing at the Cross we point at Him who hung upon that Cross. We do not ask you to look upon the Cross, but to look at Christ upon the Cross. That might be a superstition if you looked at the Cross; but it is like a grand picture, and in the centre of this picture there is hanging One who is the figure that you and I are to gaze on, and all the rest are accessories only. They are nothing compared with this Cross. We look only at Him who rendered the forgiveness of our sins possible, at Him who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. Events, as you know, are important only in proportion to their results. The greatest battles that have ever been fought have become great in the history of the world because of the results to nations, and to the life of nations, that have followed out of those terrible battles. So it is that when men live, their life is nothing: when they die that life is embalmed. Stratford-upon-Avon, what would that be if it were not for the name of William Shakespeare?—and when William Shakespeare lived in Stratford-upon-Avon he excited probably no curiosity, and very little interest, among his townfolk, but, because he wrote in such a way as to put the world in his debt, that has redeemed Stratford-upon-Avon from oblivion; and now men visit it, yes, and men come across the ocean, and men come from America, and, among all the things that they must see, they must see Stratford-upon-Avon, because William Shakespeare was born there. Or what would we think of the town of Bedford if it had not been for John Bunyan, if it were not that the tinker had been imprisoned there, and that there he dreamed out that wonderful allegory, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*? And so this world, science tells us, is one of the smallest, the most insignificant of God's planets, and when all these planets shall be burnt up, and when everything shall be dissolved, this world of ours will be gone, but there is one thing

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that will embalm it also for ever in the ages of eternity,—that Christ was born, that Christ lived, that Christ walked, that Christ died upon it, that Christ rose in it again from the dead, and from it has ascended back to the right hand of His Father; and it is this which makes it what it is,—it is the monument of earth that the Cross of Jesus should have stood upon it. And the world, though it may think nothing of this, will have to learn one day what the Church now holds to its heart,—that there is one name in the world which is the most precious and the most powerful, and that there is one spot in the world, and that is Calvary, upon which this Cross stood, which makes this world what it is. All other names shall pass away, but Jesus has done that which never will pass away, never recede, never be forgotten, never decay, never die. It is always fresh, it is always giving breath to new interests. The story of this Cross by which we stand is going out upon every wind of heaven to all parts of the earth; and to those nations that do not yet know of this message, the story of the Cross has yet to be told. Jesus has done all this, and when the names of the greatest that have ever lived shall have faded, when the tired statesman shall lie down to sleep, when the brain of the great thinker has been stilled, when the soldier shall have sheathed his sword for ever, when the very names of these holy women that stood by the Cross shall no longer be recorded, then in the ages of eternity, in louder cadences and in louder acclaim, shall be heard the name of Him who hung upon that Cross for us: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain;’ and when kingdoms shall totter and fall, when empires and thrones shall be no more, there shall be no end of His government—the government is upon His shoulders. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, because the only kingdom that is everlasting in this world of ours is the kingdom of love. That which stooped from heaven to earth, that which humbled itself and died upon the Cross, that love which goes out to seek and to save that which is lost, that love which, even in all our guilt and all our sins, pities us and pardons us—that is the kingdom of love beating in the heart of our everlasting Father, beating in the soul of His only Son, and having its climax in the death of the Saviour, circling the world to-night with those hopes and giving the last note of the anthem of the angel: ‘Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill to men.’

CANON FLEMING.

Thoughts for Palm Sunday.

- I. CHRIST a marvellous example of obedience and humility (Phil. ii. 5-8, Epistle).

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‘He then who could do so great things, was hungry, and athirst, was wearied, slept, was apprehended, beaten, crucified, slain. This is the way; walk by humility, that thou mayest come to eternity. Christ-God is the country whither we go; Christ-man is the way whereby we go. To Him we go, by Him we go; why fear we lest we go astray? He departed not from the Father; and came to us. He sucked the breasts, and He contained the world. He lay in the manger, and He fed the angels. God and Man, the same God who is Man, the same Man who is God. But not God in that wherein He is man. God in that He is the Word; Man, in that the Word was made flesh; by at once continuing to be God, and by assuming Man’s flesh; by adding what He was not, not by losing what He was. Therefore henceforward, having now suffered in this His humiliation, dead, and buried, He has now risen again, and ascended into heaven.’

—S. AUGUSTINE.

II. The great value of humility to the Christian soul.

‘Physicians and naturalists do say, that there is nothing of the mulberry tree but is medicinal and useful in some sort or other—the fruit, the root, the bark, the leaf, and all; such is the sovereign virtue of humility, that every part of it, as well the root of affections, and the bark of conversation, as the leaves of words, and the fruit of works, heals some disease or other, of the drooping sin-sick soul. Hence it is that the great Physician of our souls (as if they could never be at rest or quiet otherwise) prescribes us this recipe against all spiritual qualms and agonies, “Learn of Me, that I am lowly and meek, and you shall find rest to your souls”’ (Matt. xi. 29).—G. SPENCER.

III. Humility obtains pardon of the sinner.

‘S. Bernard’s father went into the monastery, and dwelt there a certain time, and afterwards died in good age. The sister was married into the world—and on a time she arrayed and apparelled herself in richness, and in delights of the world, and so went to the monastery for to visit her brethren in a proud state, and greatly apparelled, and he dreaded her as she had been the devil, or his net for to take souls, and he would not go out for to see her. And when she saw that none of her brethren came unto her, she melted all in tears, and said, “If I be a sinner, God died for sinners, and because that I am a sinful woman, I came for to ask counsel of them that be good, if my brother despise my flesh, he that is a servant of God ought not to despise my soul. Let my brother come to me, and what he shall command me I will do it, and hold that promise.” Then he came to her, and taught her of the right way.’—The Golden Legend—*Life of S. Bernard.*

S. J. EALES.

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Sins repented of.

And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace. LUKE vii. 50.

I. **T**HIS woman is a very parable of penitence. I note, first, that *she stands*. She is not kneeling, as she is generally painted. She stands. It is the attitude of work and service. And service is above prayer: it includes it. And as we saw in our Lord's words to S. Peter, the best language of repentance is *work*:—work done for Jesus.

Let every penitent do something: do it tearfully, and let it be a real office, undertaken for Christ. Work awakens feeling; work expresses feeling; work establishes feeling; and work concentrates feeling.

'She stood.' A serving-woman—more serving than all the servants at the feast.

Let us examine the service. You will find all the traits of a real penitent heart.

The woman standing, there, at Jesus's feet, *weeps*. What do her tears say? For tears speak many languages. Were they sorrow? Was it simply the meltings of a heart? Was it a strong emotion? Was it happiness? Was it love? All, but chiefly the last. We know, from our Lord's own words to His host Simon, that already, at that moment, the woman was 'forgiven,' and that she knew she was forgiven. For Christ said that her actions proved both her forgiveness, and her sense of it. For His argument is this: 'I tell thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven. And why do I tell you so? Because she loves much. And love proves forgiveness. We do not love till we are forgiven. And much love proves much forgiveness.' 'Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.'

Those 'tears' had in them the seven beautiful tints of the rainbow of penitence: sorrow, tenderness, spiritual feeling, joy, hope, heaven, love.

And when the woman had 'washed His feet with her tears, she wiped them with the hairs of her head.' It was beautifully tender! Nature's ornament made spiritual grace; the smallest things and the loveliest enlisted in the service of Christ.

You, that wish to be penitent, that you may have your sins forgiven,—you that are penitent, because your sins are forgiven, men of strength and manliness, women of fascination—use your physical

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endowments for good: your power and your gracefulness, can you not turn them to influence?

She 'anoints His feet with the precious ointment in the alabaster box.' The rest, it may be, was to the man—this, to the God. The rest, to Himself—this, to His office.

Perhaps she had, in her mind, His burial. But still more, by that 'ointment,' she confessed her Priest—her King—her Anointed One, in Christ.

I do not care to ask how the money was got that bought that 'ointment;' or for what that 'ointment' was first bought. It does not matter: it is a thing of the long-forgotten past. It is now Christ's. And no gift is dearer to Him than a sin sanctified: a thing redeemed from the world, and offered to God.

But, be sure of this—if you do not give your property to Christ, you have never given yourself. It is a sure test. Therefore the gift of the property made the climax. Let every one—in his own selfish, greedy heart—tell whether it is not rightly placed?

II. Meanwhile, what was Christ to the penitent? First and chiefest, we have seen that, however she came near that room, to do her sweet offices, He had met with her before, and she was forgiven. Her pardon was sealed. When, and where, and how, the Lord has not seen fit to record. But she was a forgiven woman. He hath said it. All this that she did was not cause, but consequence of forgiveness. He had begun with her. The initiative, the great work was His. His love, His washing, His kiss, and His anointing did it. The woman was only the faint echo and the deep reflection!

And now see the actual contact. The Holy, Immaculate Son of God permits this sinful 'woman of the city,' to come quite close, and do more intimate and endearing acts of love, than was ever given to mortal man during His whole life on earth to do. Not John so privileged!

There is no doubt that, all the while, 'virtue was going out' from Christ to the woman. The grace to desire, the grace to come, the grace to do, the grace to go on, the grace to be sure, the grace to be so very peaceful and happy, the grace to be capable of love—the grace of sunny tears, were all flowing, every moment from Him. And she knew it: and the deliciousness of the delight was that it all sprang from that fountain.

And so Christ went on in His contact, touching the woman, by being touched by her; loving the woman, by permitting her to love Him; comforting the woman, by being comforted by her; honouring the woman, by letting her honour Him; voiceless, but eloquent! without a word, but with more than all words, till she was attacked. And that moment Jesus rose her Champion. He owned her openly;

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He rehearsed, He detailed, He placed out, in strange contrast, her love; He remembered and recorded every line of it: the tear, the hair, the kiss, the anointing. He publicly avowed her His. He was no longer the silent Saviour; but the avenging God. He throws His broad shield of love over her. He confounds her enemies. He proclaims her 'righteousness as the noonday.'

Let me ask each one to proportion his gifts, as the woman her 'ointment,'—to the number of the sins for which he wants forgiveness. Or better still, to the measure of the love for which he can trust that all those sins have been pardoned. So will he most touch the 'feet' of Jesus; and sweet perfume will fill the whole house of earth and heaven!

J. VAUGHAN.

Some Thoughts on the Cross.

The Cross of Christ. PHIL. iii. 18.

I. 'TO this end was I born,' we hear the Saviour say. Yes, across the very Manger at Bethlehem that shadow was lying. 'And for this cause came I into the world;' and so as the years went on, more and more distinct the shadow grew. Whithersoever the Saviour turned, whatever He might be doing, there the shadow went also—across His path it lay.

Then we come to Palm Sunday. We hear the glad hosannas, we see the Holy One of God publicly honoured and received. At last the shadow is gone! Nay; there it is, darker than ever, lying right across the broad sunlit path. Darker than ever, for the Holy Week has begun, and upon every day of this week it lies dark and threatening, and as each day dawns it takes more definite shape. And then Good Friday comes, and with that day the end of the Life of Sorrows. The shadow gives place to the substance now. A terrible scene is witnessed on Calvary. All eyes are turned on the Cross of Jesus.

II. We cannot help noticing how different is the position which the Cross now holds in the world from what it did in the days when the Saviour lived and died. Then, if there was one word which more than other was associated in men's minds with ignominy and degradation, that word was the Cross. We can scarcely measure it now. Of all deaths the death of the Cross was the most ignominious, reserved for slaves and for the dregs of society.

After our blessed Lord's Ascension, His disciples went forth and began to preach 'Christ Crucified;' to the Jews a stumbling-block,

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and to the Greeks foolishness. And the whole world rose up against such teaching. Still the Cross prevailed. Men hated and despised it still, yet the Cross went on upon its leavening, conquering way.

The Cross of shame has become the Cross of glory and of victory. Napoleon the Great, speaking of this to one of his generals, Bertrand, remarks how this victory, so different from all earthly victories, was gained in 'a long combat of three hundred years . . . In this conflict all the kings and all the forces of the earth were arrayed on one side. Upon the other I see no army, but a mysterious energy—individuals scattered here and there in all parts of the globe, having no other rallying sign than a common faith in the mysteries of the Cross. What a mysterious symbol! The instrument of punishment of the Man-God. His disciples were armed with it. "The Christ," they said, "God has died for the salvation of men." What a strife, what a tempest, these simple words have raised around the humble standard of the Man-God. On the one side we see rage and all the furies of hate and violence; on the other there is gentleness, moral courage, infinite resignation. For three hundred years spirit struggled against the brutality of sense, the conscience against despotism, the soul against the body, virtue against all the vices. The blood of Christians flowed everywhere . . . Everywhere Christians fell, and everywhere they triumphed!'

III. What is a Cross? It is an upright shaft, with a cross-piece laid athwart it. 'Without the cross-piece,' says a writer, 'the upright shaft is not a cross; only when the cross-piece is added is a cross formed. Emblem of every trial which we here call a cross. The long shaft is God's Will; our will, which always desires to cross His Will, forms the cross-piece. Each cross we are called upon to bear, take from it the cross-piece—*i.e.* our will—and it will no longer prove a cross, or even a trial.'

J. B. C. MURPHY

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Cross. THE cross now hangs as an ornament from the neck of beauty. It blazes on the flags of navies and the standard of armies. Millions bow before it in adoration, as if it were a shrine of the divinity.

The attraction of the Cross. MARK the kind of power. Not destructive, repulsive, or punitive, it is attractive. It draws.

S. JOHN xii. 32. As the sun draws the vapours of the sea, and then paints a rainbow on them; so Christ draws men, and then glorifies

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them. His attraction is like that of the sun. It is magnetic too, like that of the magnet to the pole . . . It is not simply the Christ that is the magnet; it is the crucified Christ. It is crucifixion that has given Him His attractive power; just as it is death that has given Him His life-giving power. It is not Christ without the cross; nor the cross without Christ; it is both of them together.

*The Cross of
Christ.*

S. JOHN xii. 32.

As I shall be uplifted on a cross
In darkness of eclipse and anguish dread,
So shall I lift up in My piercéd hands,
Not into dark, but light—not unto death,
But life—beyond the reach of guilt and grief,
The whole creation.

The Cross of Christ. To save, means something more than to call with a voice sweeter than that of Orpheus, or even to follow with

PHIL. iii. 19. patient unwearied steps, and bring them home on the tender heart. It meant—ah! it meant—to die.

‘The good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep.’

So, by nothing easier, He sought us; so, by nothing less, He saved us. By a love as real as the passions He came to rescue us from, and divinely stronger.

By an anguish as terrible as the miseries to which those passions lead, I began to understand why the Church has adopted the cross as her central symbol, more central than even that of the Good Shepherd.

The Cross and Shame of Christ. IF a man values and seeks sensual good, he is then an enemy of the cross of Christ. If he has earthly honour

PHIL. iii. 19.

in view, and desires to distinguish himself before the world, he is then an enemy to the shame of Christ, which accompanied His sufferings.

Good Friday

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	HEB. X. 1-25.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XIX. 1-37.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	GENESIS XXII. 1-20.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	ISAIAH LII. 13, AND LIII.
SECOND MORNING LESSON	S. JOHN XVIII.
SECOND EVENING LESSON	1 S. PETER II.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Nature of Christ's Sacrifice.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? HEB. ix. 14.



THE sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ admits of being considered in a great number of different ways. We may consider it, for example, as making atonement for our sins, and we may ask how any transference and application of His merits to us that is involved in this thought can be possible. Or we may consider why any such atonement should have been necessary at all to satisfy the requirements of the divine righteousness in the moral government of the world. Both of these questions are as legitimate as they are profound, and the New Testament does in fact suggest answers to them. But there is another consideration, simpler perhaps than either of these, which is yet full of importance, and, in the order of thought, first; and that is the nature of Christ's sacrifice considered, not in its effects on us, but simply in itself—of what sort was Christ's sacrifice, and wherein lay its acceptableness? It is for this question alone that I would challenge your attention.

I ask your attention this morning to a single theme—the sacrifice of Christ, and to a single aspect of that sacrifice, namely, its character considered simply in itself. The Apostolic writer of the Epistle to

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the Hebrews finds the distinctive character of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in four points. First, it was an offering of a person—it was self-sacrifice: 'He offered Himself to God.' Secondly, the person was blameless: 'He offered Himself without spot or blemish.' Thirdly, it was a spiritual sacrifice: spirit was the sphere in which He offered Himself—in spirit. And, lastly, the spirit in which He offered Himself was 'the eternal spirit.'

I. First, then, He offered Himself, His person, His human life to God. This human life of ours is meant to move out in various directions. It moves out to the interpretation and appropriation of nature, and so man gains in natural knowledge, and advances in the resources of civilisation. It moves out again from each man towards his fellow, and so the bonds of humanity are knit and society develops. It moves out also towards God, to present itself simply before Him, and to enter into communion with Him. All the faculties of man are to be directed, not only towards Nature, not only towards his fellow-men, but also deliberately God-ward, and that first of all. This is the first and great commandment. All the material which life affords is not only to be used as means of progress, or as an instrument for social intercourse: it is also in all its parts to be converted into a free-will offering, in which man presents himself living and free before the face of God in conscious and rational homage. This was the original fundamental law of man's being; this is the ultimate goal in Christianity. 'I beseech you, brethren,' writes S. Paul, 'by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' That is the law, the principle of your being, and this reasonable service it is which is for us supremely exemplified in the human life of Jesus. That life looked man-ward, in loving ministry—'He went about doing good.' But first of all it looked God-ward in self-oblation: 'Lo, I come to do Thy will.' Even before 'Thy will be done' comes 'Thy name be hallowed'; for to please God, to present himself before God—this is the highest privilege, and this is also the primary duty, of rational man. Foolishly, narrowly, men sometimes suggest that seriously to take thought of God, to occupy ourselves in seeking the face of God, and knowing and studying to know God, is to divert the faculties, without profit, from the really useful end of human improvement.

'Presume not God to scan;
The proper study for mankind is man.'

What a shallow philosophy! For why, in fact, is it that we make little social improvement? Why are we so falsely, so ignobly tolerant of injustice, and selfishness and lust, in society and in our-

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selves? and why are the efforts for the good of man so seldom persevered in through disappointment, or so frequently allowed to degenerate into effortless routine? Why? In a word, it is because we do not think enough about God. If we constantly and systematically gazed up at Him and let His inexorable holiness, His truth, His beauty, His love—more than all, the claim of His Fatherhood on us His sons—have upon us the influence which it ought to have, penetrating into our whole being, we should be beyond all question more vigorous and persevering in moral efforts—ay, and more successful. It was the apostles, who were so full of the vision of God, who were able to ‘turn the world upside down.’

II. Secondly, He offered Himself without spot or blemish. The metaphor is from the inspection of the victim prepared for sacrifice. In the Lamb of God the scrutiny of the All-Seeing Eye can detect no disqualifying flaw. The sinlessness of Jesus is a fact no less contrary to our experience of humanity than is His miraculous mode of entrance into our mortal life, or of exit from it. Everywhere in human nature, when you inspect it at all narrowly, you discern the fact of sin. It is what baffles the philanthropist and sometimes turns him into a cynic. It embitters and enfeebles our own inner lives. It may be selfishness, or avarice, or lust, or impatience, or untrustworthiness, or presumption, or hopelessness, or want of love, or of faith. It is in part inherited and in part due to the personal misuse of our own powers. It varies in degree and character from man to man, from society to society, from age to age; but everywhere it is a present experience, and everywhere, as it impoverishes and disorders human life so, when the soul becomes enlightened to the true holiness of God, it makes men tremble, like Felix, at the bare mention of ‘righteousness and judgment to come.’ It disqualifies men altogether for approaching God. But in our Lord there was the fulness of human faculty, coupled with the absence of any moral defect or moral deficiency, and from anything which does not belong to human nature itself—a will always vigorous, unflagging, an intellect wholly unclouded and unsophisticated, of perfect receptivity and exquisite penetration, a heart of incomparable tenderness and force, which yet never moved out in uncontrolled passion or emotion, a perfect humanity which yet showed its imperfection in unresisting dependence upon the movements of the divine Spirit which filled it and directed it—a humanity rich and full in experience, passing through all sorts of vicissitudes of circumstance, yet found as perfect in one situation as another, in failure as in success—a humanity in which nothing approaching to moral decadence is to be detected, as glorious in its issue as in its inception. He offered Himself to God without blemish. He filled at large the ideal

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of humanity. He was the beloved Son in whom the Father—‘the Great Scrutiniser,’ so early writers called Him—the great Scrutiniser of human oblation, was well pleased.

III. The sacrifice of Jesus was a full, perfect, adequate self-oblation of man to God. This is, in other words, to say that it was perfectly spiritual. He offered Himself in spirit. We Englishmen have not infrequently a crudely false notion that what is spiritual in our humanity is opposed to what is material or visible, that what is visible and tangible cannot be spiritual. Never is such a notion countenanced in the New Testament. The spiritual is indeed opposed to the carnal and the formal; for the word ‘carnal’ expressed the disordered state of things in which the higher part of our nature is ruled by the lower; and ‘formal’ is used to describe a course of action in which the will and intelligence are not really enlisted at all; while ‘spiritual’ is used for every action in which the will and intellect are truly at work, the intelligence truly recognising the divine presence and purpose in the circumstances of a particular case, and the will truly, energetically, carrying out the divine law. That is spiritual in our humanity which expresses in our creation, in the wholeness of our nature, the will and mind of God the eternal Spirit. This is worship ‘in spirit and in truth,’ the worship which our Lord declares acceptable; it is worship in which the intelligence recognises God, and which directs towards Him the whole being in humble adoration. Sacrifice is spiritual which, like the sacrifice of Jesus, is expressed in the body—for it was an offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all—but which carries with it an act of real homage on the part of the intelligence and of the will. There is something spiritual in all human habits of sacrifice. Everywhere, as we scan the human horizon, man appears as a sacrificing human being. Sacrifice is the characteristic action of universal religion. Generally it seems to express one or more of three ideas—the idea of communion, or partaking with God, the idea of dependence upon Him, and the idea of deprecating His wrath by a gift or present. Something spiritual is to be found in all sacrifices, some recognition of truth, some movement of the will. But their spirituality is overclouded, sometimes almost obliterated, by the tendency to degenerate into mere routine, or, still more, by gross misconception of the being and character of God. To appreciate the Jewish system we must grasp the truth that God judges things moral, not by the standard of their attainment, but by the moral movement which they involve. It is so in the individual life. God judges a man not by that moral level, that moral equipment, from which he starts, not by the moral level that he has reached, but by the amount of moral movement in his life. There is no failure in our own personal lives except ceasing to try. The publicans and

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harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisees evermore, because the Pharisee is the man who has ceased to make effort. He has attained a level of respectability and is satisfied with it; therefore he is dead, therefore he has ceased to move, therefore in the sight of God he is lower than any one who, from whatever depth, is aspiring, and desiring, and striving. The spirituality of the Jewish system in all its parts lay in the rightness of its direction. It was a system under which the divine education in the crude Semitic habit of sacrifice was gradually organised and spiritualised. The divine character, the divine education of the Jew pointed on to Jesus, in whom it was fulfilled. This sacrifice was, as much as their own had been, material, visible, objective. As He hangs upon the Cross, He fills in the Christian imagination that sort of central place, as in a great spectacle, which only an outward visible enactment of sacrifice could have filled. But His sacrifice is supremely spiritual. Its whole moral meaning lies in the obedience it involved. He was obedient. He, the pattern man, gave to God undivided allegiance, an absolute homage. When His action on behalf of truth, and meekness, and righteousness involved the martyr's death, He accepted the conditions and offered the shedding of His blood; but in God's sight the shedding of the blood of Jesus had no value except as the symbol of an obedience carried to the extreme. This is the teaching, emphatic and plain enough, of the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the sacrifice of our Lord is put, just in this respect, in strong contrast to the sacrifices of the Law. 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins; wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Above, when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law; then said He, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that He may establish the second, by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' It is a great, a strange mistake to suppose that the death of Christ was, as it were, the act of God. It was the act in which, on the contrary, rebellion against God, the sin of man, showed itself in its true and horrible colour. What God does in the matter is to bear with it. He spares not His only Son. He exempts Him by no miracle from the consequences of His loyalty to truth, and meekness, and righteousness. God foresees and forbears with this, and He overrules it to the purposes of our redemption; but throughout, as

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Behold the Man !

Behold the man ! S. JOHN XIX. 5.

- I. ET us 'behold the man' whom the world desireth. —This is He of whom the prophet spake when he said, 'Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.'

It is not meant to assert that the great masses of men in any age were powerfully affected with moral dissatisfaction, or anything like spiritual longing for a Redeemer. Involved as they were in the darkest ignorance, sunk in moral stupefaction, 'sold under sin,' they had but a dull sense of misery, and knew not how to tell it—but a vague and dim idea of what would bring relief, and hardly knew how to raise a desire in longing for it. Yet every age has had its interpreters—men endowed with knowledge, genius, sensibility—who, while thinking only of themselves, gave voice to the sorrows of the multitude, and sent up the unuttered yearnings of a people into a mighty cry. Certainly there were always souls, if not nations, on the outlook for a Saviour. Raised by their intelligence or by their susceptibilities to the watch-towers of the world, they stood gazing wistfully into the future, to catch any rays shed from the person of the descending monarch that might be stealing in upon the darkness, and listening through the world's night-watches if perchance they might hear the stillness broken by the notes of preparation as he drew near. There was thus a yearning for deliverance, a longing in the hearts of men for relief, and liberty, and higher life—for recovery of long-lost fellowships, and for returning presence of God. Some of them felt the awful bondage of sin, and after ineffectual attempts to shake it off, groaned as beneath the iron hand of relentless fate. While these things are very affecting, they are also deeply instructive. They show us how the human race, amid its bootless struggles and grievous disappointments, was being silently and effectually prepared for the advent of the true Conqueror, the great Revealer, the appointed Redeemer of mankind. Then in the fulness of time, He comes to answer the world's questionings, to relieve its sorrows, to meet its deepest wants.

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II. 'Behold the man' whom the world crucified—for the world did crucify Jesus Christ—not the world as distinguished from the Church, but humanity as embracing the Church. If ever there was an act in which this whole world was united, the crucifixion of the Son of God was that act. It was not an accident, it was not done hastily, it was not done in a corner. The world did it—in accordance with 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,' but yet as the fair outcome and expression of its moral disposition, and its spiritual state before God. The act is far too stupendous and significant to be laid upon one man, or upon one class, or even upon one nation. All nations and all ages were represented in that solemn drama.

Christ was 'the desire of all nations' before He came, and that proved that man had not fallen into an irretrievable degradation—that seeds and elements of good were working in him still, and that the great Father was not forgetful of His prodigal children. Christ was the rejected of all nations when He came, and this proved that our fall was not a temporary and a trifling circumstance, but that it had rent the most sacred bonds, and filled human nature with guilt and sin.

III. 'Behold the man' whom the world will crown. Heaven has crowned Him already. 'He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Not only is he a throned monarch there, but crowns in abundance are cast at His feet, and hymns of praise from angels and from ransomed men are for ever floating up into His ear. The royalties of heaven are held in willing subjection to His supreme authority. The kings and nations of the great universe above do bring their honour and glory into the celestial city where He abides, and no mutinous murmur ever mingles with the ascriptions of loyalty there, and no tongue is ever silent when 'with a loud voice' they sing the new song—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!'

But earth must crown Him too. And she will. He must be honoured in the very scene of His humiliation. He must gather joys where He sowed tears and sufferings. He must claim a kingdom where He shed His blood. And the kingdom will be given to Him—the crowns of all the earth will be laid at His feet. And not a murmur of dissent will be heard from shore to shore as He ascends into the throne of the world, and proclamation is made through every land that 'the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ.'

A. RALEIGH.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Jesus crowned with Thorns.

Then Jesus came forth, wearing the crown of thorns. S. JOHN xix. 5.

THE wearing of the crowns is reserved for royal brows. Jesus is the world's King. When Pilate asked Him on the day of His great agony, 'Art thou a King then?' Jesus acknowledged the title and added, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.' The title that was nailed in derision above His head upon the cross was indeed true: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' Jesus Christ is the greatest of all Kings.

In His own word He is called the 'King of kings and Lord of lords.' He excels all other kings in many ways:—(1) In the glory of His appearance. 'He is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person.' (2) In the ancientness of His dynasty. His 'goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' (3) In the spotlessness of His character. Even demons called Him 'the Holy One of God.' (4) In the power of His word. The word of kings is full of power. (5) In the splendour of His court. (6) In the kindness and gentleness of His rule. (7) In His love to His people. (8) In the extent of His dominions. (9) In the attachment of His subjects. Napoleon Buonaparte, when a captive on the island of St. Helena, is reported to have said, 'Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him.' (10) In the greatness of His victories. (11) In the number and brilliancy of His titles. And (12) In the length of His reign, for 'He shall reign for ever and ever.'

The Apostle John, in one of those glorious visions of the glorified Saviour related in the Book of Revelation, says of Him, 'And on His head were many crowns.' Earthly kings often have but one royal crown. Eighteen hundred years ago Jesus was thought worthy of many crowns. How has their number been increased in later times—crowns of Divine honours, of joy, of loving worship, and of those unknown conquests which we hope to understand when we see Him as He is.

I. Those who refuse to open their hearts to the message of Christ's love and will not hear the Gospel, crown Him with thorns. Many young people would be sure to yield to the Saviour if they only listened to His voice. They know this, and they will not give attention to the Word.

II. Those who do listen to the Saviour's voice, and then treat His love as though it were just nothing at all, also give Jesus this cruel and unworthy crown. 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?'

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asks Jesus by one of the old prophets. It would seem as if He were indeed nothing to many who have both heard and felt the power of His glorious Gospel. Many forget the Word as soon as they have heard it.

One spring afternoon, while some friends of mine were gathering primroses on a sunny bank, I sat watching a sower going to and fro across a large field, scattering handfuls of barley upon the ploughed land as he went. Flocks of birds too were watching the sower, and before the seed could be harrowed in by another husbandman, down swept the birds upon the seed corn and carried much of it away.

Then I thought of the Saviour's parable in Matthew xiii., where He says, speaking of the Word of God, 'Behold, a sower went forth to sow: and when He sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.' How painful it must be for the Lord Jesus to see His precious Word quite thrown away upon careless and indifferent souls!

III. Again, broken promises are thorns with which many persons crown the Saviour in these days.

Like the son in the Saviour's parable of the vineyard, to whom his father said, 'Son, go work to-day in my vineyard,' and who answered reverently and at once, 'I go, sir,' but never went; many persons give Jesus only broken vows for His reward.

IV. Unwillingness to believe Christ and to trust Him to save us is another crown of this sort. The Bible calls this 'unbelief.' Some there are who feel deeply their need of Jesus and His forgiving love, but will not believe His promise that He will receive and save them, and so they will not come to Him and trust Him. This pierces the soul of Jesus like as the thorns pierced His brow. 'He delighteth in mercy.' 'He cannot deny Himself.' He has said, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out,' and He never will.

V. Once more, to turn away from Jesus when we have once loved Him is to crown Him afresh with thorns.

When those who have once been the friends of Jesus turn away from Him, and again give their hearts to the pleasures of the world, then we may ask the Saviour, in the words of the prophet, 'What are these wounds in Thine hands?' and He will answer us, 'These with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' Perhaps nothing is more painful to the Lord Jesus Christ than to be forsaken and denied by those who have once loved Him.

VI. To crown Jesus with thorns in any of the above ways:

1. Excites Divine surprise.

2. It causes Divine grief. 'O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!' How much sorrow was hidden under that bitter cry who can know? Over His

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ancient and rebellious people He sometimes cried, as though in pain and grief, 'O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee?' 'O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?' And though we cannot now hear the Divine voice as the prophets and disciples did of old, God does still speak in this way, and is much pained by the hardness and unbelief of sinners.

3. It provokes Divine anger.

R. BREWIN.

The Legacy of Love.

Woman, behold thy son! S. JOHN XIX, 26.

I. IT often happens in ordinary life that death separates acquaintanceships. The death of a mutual friend is the signal of the dissolution of that partnership of love and friendly intercourse among those whom his hospitality united under one roof. He has been the living centre of that circle, and he is gone; the little parties are no more, the friendliness among the once guests drops into ordinary acquaintance, and the tide of other occupations coming in sweeps them out of range of one another, till even as acquaintances they cease to meet. But the reverse of this is seen in the death of Christ. The Virgin and St. John found their union in Him. His death, like the death of many others, might have served their interest and ended their amity; but He determines that it shall be otherwise. His death is to accomplish a world-wide reconciliation, and to forge new links of love; to deepen attachments, not to sunder friendships; to invest with the sanctity of a new-born family tie all the relationships of life; to unite, not to divide. From His cross He proclaims that those who were not related before have found kinship in Him. 'Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother.' And is not this the universal declaration of Christianity? The cross may pass away; the Apostle and the Virgin may be laid in the tomb; but the power of the Cross and the vitality of the principle which slept in His words can never die, for in Christ the distinctions which separated man from man and race from race are dissolved. The middle wall of partition is thrown down. The Gospel, wide as the heart of God, knows no man after the flesh. There is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. All are one in Christ Jesus. And we may find our mothers, sisters, brothers—in the families, the widows, the orphans, the destitute; for they are sorrowing ones needing comfort, bereaved ones needing love; they are our kin in Christ's cross. Behold them. 'Behold thy mother!' 'Behold thy son!'

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II. But Christ teaches more than this. If in His cross He has cemented the great fabric of humanity by a glorious redemption and by the spirit of His self-sacrifice and love, He has declared also that He has established new obligations. For if we rejoice to think that all the world is made one brotherhood in Christ, we cannot accept this relationship without its corresponding obligations. Relationships imply obligations. We cannot accept the law of brotherhood, or the privileges of family, without acknowledging its claims. 'Whoso seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' How can the spirit of brotherhood be in him? How can the love of God, which has generated this new brotherhood in Christ's cross, dwell in him? But there is a law in our nature by which the more nobly and powerfully a cause appeals to our sentiments, the more are we tempted to rest content with the thrill of those sentiments, and, alas! to fail to carry them into action. The sentiment of the brotherhood of the world—the enthusiasm of humanity, the tie forged in the fiercest of Christ's sufferings and cemented in His blood, the fraternity wide as the sufferings and needs of man are wide—is a great and soul-stirring sentiment. But it is easy to think, because we have felt nobly, we have done nobly; and therefore Christ Jesus enforces upon us the responsibilities arising from this brotherhood by turning upon us the necessity of fulfilling its obligations. He does this by absenting Himself from the great arena in which the duties and claims of the brotherhood and family are most often enforced and experienced. It is when He no longer will be at hand to protect His mother, or to cherish her in her advancing years, that He cries, 'Behold thy son!' It is when He is absent, and the loving disciple can no longer lay his head upon Christ's breast, that Christ points him to the warm sympathy of a woman's heart, 'Behold thy mother!'

Happy, then, is he who has accepted from Christ this legacy of love, and who frets not at the responsibilities which become his when he views the world from beneath the cross of the Lord! His burdens increase, but his joys increase with them. All the world is akin to him; he is debtor to every race and every class. Where formerly he saw what repelled, now he sees what attracts. Where he once beheld a squalid, hard, uninteresting world, now he sees in it fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, manifold more than he dreamed of in his selfish days. He sees them in the light of things unseen and eternal; and ever a voice too mighty to be disobeyed and too sweet to be disregarded speaks in his heart, 'Behold thy mother!' 'Behold thy son!'

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Coat without a Seam.

Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.
S. JOHN xix. 23, 24.

I. IF we may take the seamless robe of Christ as an emblem of His system of teaching and worship and morality, we may regard it as representing the character of Christ. This was the garment wherewith he was clad; a personal righteousness—unique, harmonious, unapproachable. For if you will but mark the various virtues which have appeared in all the great and holy of mankind—the faithfulness, for example, which shone in Abraham, the father of the faithful, the meekness which marked the great legislator of Israel, the courage which distinguished her earliest captain, the wisdom which marked the most sagacious of her kings—you will find that Jesus Christ reflects them all in His character.

See how that in His character those virtues which are usually incompatible unite in Him. When you measure men by the ordinary standards of judgment, you class them amongst the desponding or the sanguine. But, looking at the character of Christ, we hesitate to say whether the vein of sadness or the vein of gladness predominated. If for one moment you are inclined to speak of Him as ‘a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,’ you remember how He mingled with the innocent joys of men, how He sanctioned their festivities with His presence, how He was accused by His enemies as ‘the friends of publicans and sinners.’

Or take the character of a man whom you would call severe: you do not expect to find gentleness as an element of such a disposition. Yet in Jesus Christ the severity is all the more conspicuous because it blends with ineffable tenderness. He could stand before those who were traitors to their God and people, and denounce their life as faith-killing and hypocritical; but He could also sit on the Mount of Olives and weep tears of grief and tender love over the devoted city, and speak of the time when He would have gathered all her children under His protection, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.

II. If this, then, is the legacy which Christ has left—a system unique, a morality based on eternal principles, a character which stands alone—how has it been received? It fell into the hands of the world. Many there are, like the rude Roman soldiery, content to receive its benefits, but who ignore the Sufferer. Thousands there are, alas! in our midst, who are content to enjoy the civilisation

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which we enjoy, to breathe the atmosphere of freedom which we breathe, to find themselves surrounded by the blessings of a morality infinitely superior to anything ever dreamt of by the heathen, but who seldom, if ever, cast a glance upon the crucified One who taught the principles whence all these blessings spring. Others there are who, gaining much from Christ, sit down coldly to criticise and divide; but these, though they have tried to rend asunder His system because it does not please them, though they have dispensed with proofs and evidences, and refused to investigate their force, have often reached a point where they stagger and hesitate to assail the character of Jesus. Then, like the Roman soldiers, with the singularly wrought robe of the Saviour before them, they feel constrained to cry, 'Let us not rend it.' As the barbarian hordes sweeping into the senate-house of ancient Rome stood for a moment abashed at the native dignity and venerable aspect of the Conscript Fathers, so ruthless and hostile hands have held back for a moment ere they assailed the character of Christ.

But it is a legacy to us. All that He has left behind—His righteousness, His character—He has bequeathed to you and to me. Let us stand for a moment in thought near the cross of Calvary. Jesus hangs upon that cross accomplishing redemption for us, and there falls into our hands this spotless righteousness, this blameless character. How shall we use it? This righteousness of Christ's is no fictitious thing. It comes to us fraught with a heavenly power. Unlike the envenomed robe of Alcides, which clung about his frame and poisoned his veins, this robe of Christ's righteousness imparts to us not death, but life. Only then when we take His robe, and wear it unrent, only when we don His righteousness in its integrity, are we strong to go upon the lion and adder, and to trample the young lion and dragon under our feet.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

For Good Friday.

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
ISAIAH liii. 4, 5, 6.



THE Christian's hope, as derived from the New Testament, rests upon the *vicarious Sacrifice* of Christ; by which expression we understand that Christ in His own person underwent that punishment which was due to our sins, that He suffered in our stead, and was in fact the great Sacrifice, of which the sacrifices of the law, and those amongst the Gentiles, were the types and shadows—the sacrifice which was to take away the sins of the world. Now in the three verses which compose the text there are no less than six distinct and independent assertions of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. First, He had borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Secondly, He was wounded for our transgressions. Thirdly, He was bruised for our iniquities. Fourthly, The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. Fifthly, By His stripes we are healed. And sixthly, The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. The writer appears actually to labour for expressions capable of conveying the high and wonderful truth which the Holy Spirit was revealing to his mind.

I. We require to be reminded of the relations in which, by virtue of this stupendous sacrifice, we are now placed to our heavenly Father—relations which are too often forgotten in the hurry of the world, and which even the solemn observances, enjoined at this season by our pure and apostolical Church, are scarcely sufficient to illustrate and enforce. Too many speak of the Holy Passion week who do not keep it holy, who give no practical thought to the passion which is then commemorated. The season is the most solemn and affecting which the year brings round, and our Church, 'which is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,' in the midst of the infidelity and indifference by which this age is unhappily distinguished, lifts up her testimony from year to year to the truth of

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Christ crucified. It is in the sufferings then, which we, as members of that true Church, are met this day to record, and in the glorious resurrection, of which the commemoration is drawing near, that the true and only hope of the Christian is founded. It is in the joint efficacy of the death and of the resurrection of our blessed Lord that our salvation becomes complete.

II. 'We preach, therefore, Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.' To accept this doctrine we must cast off all the high and proud thoughts of man's wisdom. We must confess that 'all we like sheep have gone astray, that we have turned every one to his own way,' before we can believe that 'the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' We must feel the necessity for a Redeemer, we must know the state of bondage and perdition in which we were lying, before we can appreciate the liberty and glorious adoption which He has purchased for us by His blood. How severe, indeed, that bondage must have been, how perilous that condition, is evident from the price which our deliverance required, no less than the incarnation of the Son of God Himself, and 'after He had been found in fashion as a man,' the sufferings of His mortal nature, and His actual death upon the cross.

If we would be glorified with Christ, we must likewise suffer with Him, and therefore the afflictions, the struggles, the temptations, the self-denial, which belong to the Christian life here, will be embraced by us with joy, as corresponding, though at an infinite distance, to the sufferings of 'the Captain of our salvation.' The true Christian's language is the same as the Apostle's, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Our whole life, in every particular, will bear a relation to our faith in the atonement; we shall daily and hourly strive 'to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof;' 'to put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The eternal life, which Christ has purchased for us in the world to come, is thus in some sort begun even in the world which now is. The faith, the hope, and the charity of the Christian, 'the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,' such as it is permitted us to attain to here, are only the small beginnings of the heavenly and angelic dispositions which shall hereafter animate the 'spirits of just men made perfect.'

R. W. JELF.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Agony of Injustice.

The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine.

S. JOHN xviii. 19.

AS we read the gospel story—written with severest reserve—one may ask, after we have turned our back on the fire in the open court of the official residence of the high priest, and when we have entered into a room, which was never so sanctified and so depraved as when Christ stood within its confines, what, on the whole, was the character of the trial which ended in the death-sentence being passed upon the Prince of Life? We are, say, in His Holy Presence. There is the judge of God's chosen nation. He represents a principle and procedure which is age-long, and in the next order to sacred literature. There are the witnesses. There is the great council, whose members have a series of noble traditions, and are not without the inspiration which comes of a splendid past. And there is the Christ. He has been betrayed. He has been arrested. He is bound, and no doubt nervously observed by those whose iron hands wield iron swords and cruel clubs. Shall Christ have justice done Him? Of mercy no mention can be made. We know that ecclesiasticism, enraged, envious, sanguinary, had long resolved upon His murder. But justice is a fundamental conception. Authority cannot survive its denial. Religion reinforces the demands which society makes for its maintenance, administration, and impartiality. The unwritten Magna Charta of humanity requires justice for every one who is arraigned.

The Hebrews were committed to this by more solemn sanction than any nation known to history. With this high trust in their keeping, as the very Word of God, how was the trial of Jesus Christ conducted? Shall we find, as we study its details, that, in addition to the anguish which already lacerated His loving and sinless soul, a fiercer storm swept over Him, in unreasoning gusts of judicial frenzy; in wild swirls of sacerdotal vehemence; in shameful and brazen violations of every principle which the love of God and the laws of man had formulated, to cover each defenceless head, to shield the sanctities of life, to preserve justice from the tyrannies of passion, from the cowardice of truculence, and from the petty intrigues of the partisan, the infamous, and the false? Yes, we shall see that the agony of injustice was another and even an unexpected feature in the closing scenes of the life of the Holy One and the Just.

I. The inquiry of the text was wholly illegal and unjust. It was illegal to initiate criminal proceedings after sunset, or before a sabbath or a feast day. This order was respected when the two disciples,

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who alone of the eleven were now in Christ's neighbourhood, were arrested by the same Sanhedrin, and were tried by the same intriguing family, 'Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest.' By their influence, as expressing the vote of the council, the apostles were apprehended. 'They laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day, *for it was now eventide.*' Nor may we doubt that the imprisoned apostles recalled again and again the different treatment to which our Lord was but a few weeks before subject. He was hurried to the palace, and, while the inquiry of Annas must have been altogether irregular, it was unquestionably illegal as to time. It was no less so because of the absence of witnesses and the peculiar position which they occupied in such cases. They opened the trial. Their testimony furnished the facts upon which the accused was arraigned. Witnesses, at such an hour, there were none—a fact which should have restrained Annas from his untimely and prejudicial inquiry.

II. Once more. By tradition and by usage, Annas, instead of examining Christ, should have saved Him from examination by any one, especially at such a time, Christ being alone, unaccused, and undefended by witnesses. In this one and opening stage of the trial we recognise four flagrant perversions of Hebrew law. Christ should not have been tried the day before either the sabbath or a feast, or during the night, or without witnesses, or by the high priest. How our blessed Lord regarded these, S. John alone informs us. 'Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. *Why askest thou Me?* ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.'

III. The Saviour, by His silence, practically withdraws from the trial. He gives no answer to a judge who had already trampled upon every principle and violated every regulation which he was supposed to revere and to represent. Jesus will not refute men who have openly parted with honour, with truth, and with every lingering remnant of rectitude. They are left to themselves, so far forth as law is concerned. We have no means of knowing at what stage of the trial the whole council met; but we do know they were present when the final scene took place. May not the silence of the Saviour have been regarded as the opportunity to summon the seventy-one to whom alone belonged the power to pass sentence of death? This seems likely.

The sentence which was passed by the Sanhedrin at the close of the cause was as unjust as we have seen every step and stage in the preceding part of the trial to be. From the initial inquiry, personal and

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informal, to the final scene, when Christ stood in the presence of the guiltiest seventy men that ever lived, law was ignored, was outraged, was degraded. Injustice was openly perpetrated. The soul of Christ was harrowed by agony, the depth of which may never be known, and although for us men and for our salvation all this was endured in Christ's progress towards the cross, yet the reign of Divine sovereignty is by no means incompatible with human responsibility. We see not how or where these lines may meet. We wait to understand this until we are in the calm light of that Presence whose earthly ministry closed in a murder which was conceived in hatred, planned in jealousy, prosecuted in malignant mendacity, and perfected in the most terrible injustice ever inflicted by man or ever beheld by God.

DEAN LEFROY.

The Agony of Injustice.

What accusation bring ye against this man? S. JOHN xviii. 29.

WITH these magisterial words we pass from an atmosphere heated by white-hot frenzy into the ice-cold air of Roman law. They are the utterance of authority. They are dignified. They are unbiassed. They are just. Used as they were in the presence of an enraged and even sanguinary crowd of priests—every one of whom was confident that the Accused would die immediately—they seem haughty in their resolute demand, and were, of all words, the very ones which were calculated to madden the Sanhedrists, because they appeared to delay His death, and might even imperil their nefarious and illegal proceedings. The greater their desire that effect should be given, and speedily, to their vote, the more indignant and uncontrollable their vehemence at its possible postponement.

The inquiry, 'What accusation bring ye against this man?' exhibits a fundamental difference between Hebrew and Roman law. In the former, the accusation was drawn from the evidence of the witnesses; in the latter, the accusation preceded and was the initial step in the trial, the procedure of which was accentuated by the successor of Pilate when S. Paul's life was endangered. The words of Festus illuminate the inquiry of Pilate: 'It is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter laid against him.'

Thus the demand for the criminal information is in accordance

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with the principle Festus acted on, as well as with the spirit and traditional usage of Roman law. It was an authoritative intimation that Pilate would review the whole case, and that, standing upon his rights as the representative of the imperial power, he would ignore the sentence at which the Sanhedrin had arrived, and possibly remove the degrading symbols from the neck and from the hands of Christ, and set Him at liberty. The demand for the accusation receives a prompt and somewhat insolent reply: 'If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.'

This shows their objection to all that Pilate's rightful demand implies, and it further shows that what they required was not a rehearing of the cause, but the judge's acquiescence in their condemnation of the Prisoner, and his indorsement of their sentence. He was not to inquire. He was not to examine. He was to be done with preliminaries. He was only to fiat their conclusion. In a word, he was to debase imperial power by exercising it at the bidding of the priests. Pilate sees, with transparent clearness, the reality and the gravity of the issue. He refers the case back to them, to be tried by their law. They reveal at once their design and their humiliation, when they announced their inability to inflict death upon the Saviour. The proceedings have now reached what may be described as a deadlock. They have ascended already to that point at which Pilate could have dismissed the case, released the Christ, and have administered justice.

I. Pilate proved himself false to the law which he was there to administer. He had pronounced Christ to be without fault. He was listening to those who had been discredited by the procedure to which they appealed and by which Pilate was bound. No further word from Christ would cause them to do right. It could but intensify their guilt. The silence of God has its place in the moral harmony of the universe. Meanwhile the infuriated and sanguinary Jews, with tongues relaxed by passion, and memories dulled by ingratitude, mention Galilee as having suffered from the disturbances caused by the Prisoner. The wavering judge—weak, vacillating, cowardly—snatches at the word. He remembers how he stands towards the irritated Idumæan, and, availing himself of a point of law, he cringes before a boisterous mob; he sues, on his knees, for the friendship of a guilty and a gory prince, and he despatches One whom he has, from his chair, declared to be innocent, to stand his trial before Herod! This involves the procession of our Lord, as a sinful and a guilty felon, through the streets towards the palace which Herod had degraded by grovelling vice.

The injustice of Pilate towards our Lord is a fearful study. From beginning to end his was 'a course which, beginning with indecision

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and complaisance, passed through all the phases of alternate bluster and subserviency; persuasion, evasion, protest, and compromise; superstitious dread, conscientious reluctance, cautious duplicity, and sheer moral cowardice at last; until this Roman remains photographed for ever as the perfect features of the unjust judge, deciding against his better knowledge, not deceived.

That the Roman, like the Hebrew trial, inflicted sore anguish upon our most just Lord no man can doubt or deny. It is equally certain that its incidents contributed to His agony. Amongst these we may reckon the frequent and, it is all too likely, the violent removals of the Redeemer from place to place, involving as these did exposure to the heartless and to the cruel, and the demonstration of what humanity can be when its moral restraints are consumed in the fires of lust or are drowned in blood. Nor may we forget what must assuredly have heightened the woe of our dear Lord—I mean His awful, His absolute, His utter loneliness.

II. There is not in the holy Gospels a trace of the presence of one of His followers at the Roman trial. The sun shone out on that March morning. Its impartial rays fell alike upon hoary Sanhedrist, upon punctilious scribe and Pharisee, upon the Innocent who was accused, and upon the representative of Roman law. Pilate had, no doubt, in his staff those who were jealous of the empire's unchallenged domination, and obsequious in obedience to its majesty. The Sanhedrin had in its members all that comes, even to the vicious, from numbers, from unity, from resolve. Jesus was alone. When the altercation between the council and the governor revealed the lawlessness by which the former was actuated, and the lawfulness by which the latter appeared to be influenced; when His acquittal became the outcome of the conflict; and when, sooner than it should become possible, three new charges, false, malicious, unsupported, were laid—Jesus was alone. The sensitiveness of a high nature must, by the laws of being, live on and even rely upon sympathy, one thrill of which never vibrated the soul of Him to whom it would have been as the sweetest music of a purer and a better world. Nor may we forget that when the noblest souls are deprived of sympathy—especially if duty lie in the glare of public life—they incur the liability of becoming stern and hard. Not so was it with our Saviour. His cries from the lonely cross reveal, amongst other great truths, that the dreariness of the trials never chilled the ardour of His love, even when agony was poignant and oppressive and searching.

III. And we cannot doubt that injustice, as we have seen it, contributed to that agony. Every alleged violation of order was disproved. Every assertion of transgression was invalidated. Every accusation of crime, which was regarded as rendering Him answerable

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to law, was shown to be excogitated in malice, expressed in mendacity, and designed to murder. Hence it is that, reviewing the proceedings so far as they have been preserved, it is absolutely certain that, amongst the whole assemblage that gathered together that morning, there was not one who believed Jesus to be guilty of treason. It is equally certain there was not one who was willing He should be treated as innocent. And so Jesus died by an act of judicial murder. Both the trials to which He submitted represent to all time the shocking paradox of the irreligion of religion and the lawlessness of law; while deeper than priestly intrigue or than political circumstance is the sovereign will of the Eternal. He works out His long-laid purpose amid the awful freedom of individual choice, colliding interests, crashing systems, and institutions which represent the slow growth of centuries of opinion, of conflict, of effort. Nowhere in the wide and varied range of human history does the divine purpose of Love appear at once so dark and so bright as beneath the long shadow of the cross. Nowhere does the human will appear at its basest as when it seems to be as free as the tide, which, while free, is yet subservient to planetary law. Purpose and freedom have brought Christ to the judgment seat. Freedom, but not purpose—since God can no more do wrong than He can make a number less than one—inflicted the most frightful agony of injustice upon the soul of the Immaculate. But when a day which dawned in beauty had died in blood, voices which time can neither weaken nor stifle were heard from the far-off past. They gathered strength amidst the glories of the Easter sunrise. We interpret their syllables. They announce to a world—sinful, selfish, and loveless—that ‘He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.’ While S. Peter, referring apparently to the agonising experience of our Lord at this time, inspires us by the moral beauty of His example, in words which have ere now restrained the petty swell of impatience and braced the courage of the martyr: ‘who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.’

DEAN LEFROY.

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V OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Events beneath the Cross of the Lord.

And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour; and they crucified Him. And the superscription of His accusation was written over, The King of the Jews, etc. S. MARK XV. 24-41.



THE events beneath the cross of the Lord.

We observe—

I. What men were doing during the crucifixion of the Lord; and

II. What God was doing there.

I. The men who were assembled around the cross of Christ were not all doing the same thing.

We will first direct our attention to those immediately surrounding the cross—the soldiers. Careless security is the characteristic feature in their appearance. They have just completed a difficult work—three crucifixions; they do not appear to feel that. They have now to guard the crucified: that causes them no anxiety. They are thinking only of the common gain which this terrible event might bring them. They wish to make it as high as possible. They are calculating calmly, completely absorbed in the most common earthly interests; at such an hour as this! The blind god of this blind world—chance—is to decide. They cast lots for the vesture of the Lord. But it is not chance which governs here, but the providence of the living God; they are by their thoughtless proceedings fulfilling the ancient prophecy of the Scripture.

II. Let us direct our attention to the great multitude of the Jews. A great crowd pass by the cross of the Lord, not merely as idle spectators, but railing on Him, and wagging their heads. The figure of the crucified One is to them merely a perplexity, a night without light. What can they say to it? In the best case merely shake their heads at it, or worse, exercise their wit on this mystery—worst of all, blaspheme, and pass by this appearance as one which does not deserve that an intelligent man, who has a right understanding, should trouble his head about it. If they remained beneath the cross, this mystery might be solved for them, at least in such a way as it was for the centurion by the words of the Lord. But thus could they

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not understand the words which the Lord spoke from the cross, but only pervert them, even if they fell accidentally upon their ears (ver. 35, 36).

So many still pass this cross merely as spectators, as if they could be merely spectators beneath it! railing on Him and wagging their heads. They still feel that, however obscure the whole may look, a mighty voice of God is speaking from the cross to the soul, which does not rest until it has come to a decision, either for or against God. They would rather avoid this decision. Therefore they pass by; but, in order to justify themselves, they complain of the obscurity of the matter, that the cross of Christ is not so entirely the power of God which it is said to be, that they have experienced beneath it no joyful satisfaction. They have understood one word of the crucified One falsely, and complain that it is foolishness. Presumptuous folly!

III. Still, they do not all pass by the cross of Jesus. A little company is quietly standing by it with weeping eyes, and they do not forsake it. It is the little company of the friends of the crucified One.

They stood at a distance and looked on. They had followed Jesus out of Galilee, and ministered unto Him. They did not now forsake Him. But most of them stood afar off, with the exception of a few, as the mother of Jesus and the mother of S. John, who were standing so near that the Lord could speak to them. Most of them stood afar off, partly from fear of the Jews, partly from fear of the heartrending sight which was so near. Yes, and another want is also connected with this. The word of the Lord (S. Luke xxiii. 28) may apply also to their grief: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.'

Among us also there may not be wanting a little company of friends of the crucified One, who are standing weeping beneath His cross. But the same reproaches affect most of them. Do not most of them stand afar off? The nearer we are beneath the cross, the more traceable are the wonders of His hand of blessing. We see that in the pardoned criminal. Only quite near to Him! we need not shrink away from Him! We may have Him, the Crucified One, near us every moment, quite close to us; we need not make a long journey to Him.

IV. Did God shatter the blasphemers with the flash of His lightning? No. Without such just violence He was able to give a powerful testimony to this just man, so that men were without excuse if they remained in error concerning Him. He offered them the key to the understanding of that which they saw happening to Jesus. And He now always lays a similar testimony before all those who

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come near the cross of Christ, that is to say, in the spiritual sense, those to whom Christ comes, and to whom He is a living power.

1. Let us look at the 'darkening of the sun, and the earthquake.' God caused, during the three hours in which the Lord hung on the cross, 'a darkness over all the earth, and the sun was darkened.' He marked this hour, therefore, as an hour of darkness, in which the powers of darkness were in motion, as the hour of the decisive conflict of the two kingdoms of light and darkness, as a terribly solemn hour, when it was not a time to play thoughtlessly, or to blaspheme profanely, or to wag the head. He seemed to withdraw the hand of His mercy and light for a period from the earth, and allowed it to behold itself in its real condition. Then it could see itself in its own darkness and night. He caused the earth to quake, and gave a prelude of the last day. It is enough that He omitted nothing, in order to produce, by the view of the Crucified One, the sacred, awe-struck, earnest frame of mind, which is suitable to the contemplation of such an event.

2. Let us also observe the 'rending of the veil.'

This day was a day on which heaven and earth were rolled together like a worn-out garment, and a new creation began. As in the beginning of creation darkness lay upon the earth, so also it did this day, when a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth, were formed; a new spiritual creation. The boundary partition of the old creation, the veil of the Holy of Holies, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The entrance into God's Holy of Holies was opened at the moment in which Jesus died. The old covenant, which was a covenant of types and shadows of the really good things which should then be revealed, was done away. God declared plainly that the everlasting atonement for sins was accomplished by the death of this righteous man; that the time of types and shadows was past, and the time of reality and truth had begun.

Does not God testify powerfully in solemn hours by His Spirit? Do we not then experience, or have a dim feeling at least, that the Holy of Holies is standing open for us? That our sin is atoned for, and that we may become reconciled with God? but also that old things have passed away, and all things must become new; that our whole previous life was only a confused dream and a fleeting shadow, that we henceforth must leave shadows alone, and must penetrate into the reality of knowledge and of virtue?

3. 'The graves also were opened.'

God immediately testifies of the commencement of this new creation through the Crucified One, and hereby testifies that it is made to be a creation of resurrection and of life, for which all the holy men of the first creation waited.

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In such hours this testimony also is not wanting. Yes, we feel them then break forth, the beginnings of a new life which makes itself known as proceeding from God, and which is imperishable, of a life of love to God and to man, of a life of knowledge. This may pass away. It comes as a beginning of spring in the heart: we see the breaking of the resurrection morning of our innermost existence.

R. ROTHE.

The Blessing of Failure.

He saved others; Himself He cannot save. S. MARK XV. 31.

I. **T**HIS is the great lesson of failure—It is God's will. What a world of meaning there is in those few words! If you believe in Him, if you believe that He has made you, and that He loves you and desires your good, why should you be so impatient and impetuous? Why should you think that things would be better, for you or for others, if they could be shaped according to your poor human will, instead of being as He, your Father, wills them to be? God does not blame you for not having the gifts He denies. The man who had one talent in the parable was not punished for having only one talent, but for not making a good use of the talent he had. No doubt in using your own poor talent you will be disappointed; but what matters it? you shall have done your duty, and the issue of your duty rests with God.

II. But even humanly speaking, I think it is past dispute that we form far too ready judgments of success and failure. We set our hearts upon a certain object, and if we do not attain it, we say at once, 'There; I have failed'; or if we do attain it, we say, 'There is a success,' as if there could be no degree of doubt about it. But is not experience always teaching in some strange way that we do not really know what is best for us, or, in other words, that our successes are often failures, and our failures, which we deplore, are often successes? An accomplished lady wrote not long ago that she had lived long enough to thank God for not having granted her prayers; she meant for not having granted them in the way which she would have chosen. Believe me, as you proceed in life, as you look backward upon the ever-lengthening vista of past years, you will see more and more clearly that it would not have been good for you to have your own way, that you have learnt more from your trials than from your triumphs, and that God has been dealing with you lovingly and wisely, like a Father, in denying you the desire of your hearts, and in teaching you, by however hard a discipline, that you must give up what has seemed to you

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The Penitent's Request granted.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. S. LUKE xxiii. 39-43.

FOR eighteen hundred years has this text been speaking—speaking, in over two hundred languages. Who can tell the amount of good which these precious words have produced? Let us hear them speak to us this night; they speak of Christ, they throw a broad light—

First, on the office and character of Christ;

Secondly, they throw a broad light as to the character of those who come to Christ; and,

Thirdly, they throw a broad light on where the Christian will be after death.

I. Here, in this passage, we have one who to all appearance was past hope and was about to die—a convicted and condemned malefactor; one who had had no time till now to show Christ his ruined condition; one whose feet were now nailed to the cross; one who had never been received into a Christian church; one who had never been baptized; one who had not partaken of the Lord's Supper; one vile, sinful, wretched. Surely if the ordinances of religion were salvation, there would have been no hope for such as he. But Jesus did not reject him, He loved him, and plucked him as a brand from the burning, to make him a jewel in His crown. He is able to save, He is willing to save, to the very uttermost, all who come unto God by Him, and him that cometh He will in no wise cast out. There is no spot on the heart which His precious blood cannot take out; there is not the foulest stain on the conscience which He cannot cleanse. It is said that there are spots of human blood in the palace of Holyrood, connected with the time of Mary Queen of Scots, which can never be taken out. But though your guilt has eaten, like a canker, into your souls, the precious blood of Christ can remove it; the blood of Jesus can wash out every and the deepest stain. How many bishops, writers, and others threw themselves upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus as their only hope, their only plea. One of our best bishops, when he came to die, exclaimed—'The precious blood of Christ! the precious blood of Christ! the precious blood of Christ!'

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How striking, too, was the dying language of Bishop Butler, the author of the *Analogy of Religion*, how comforting to him in his latest moments—‘Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.’ How comforting and supporting is the work, the power, and the willingness of Christ to the soul, when as the storm gathers round it and the dark days come, it can turn to Christ as its rest in the rock, and, like Paul, exclaim: ‘I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.’

II. The text, in the second place, shows us who they are who come to Christ—they are penitents. It is a very common thing to misunderstand the penitent. People are apt to say, when they see a person penitent for sin—‘He will never hold on his way (they never look for it to last); I am as good as he is, why should not I get to heaven as I am?’ Let us see the exhibition of evidence in the life. It must be a grace that cannot be severed from the heart to be real; a witness of the Holy Ghost that he is a new creature, that he is born of God. Grace there was in Christ; let us see that grace manifested in his life, a grace which shall give him strength to resist sin, and love holiness, to love Christ, and to hate what he hates; a grace which shall make you happy and safe in life; a grace which shall make you joyful in death.

III. In the third place, the text throws a broad light on where the Christian will be after death—‘Thou shalt be with Me.’ How many who have stood beside the dying bed, and have smoothed the dying pillow of some one near and dear to them, who have done all they could to make the pathway easy over the dark waters of death—who, as they have watched the eyes close for ever upon this vale of tears—who, as they have followed them to the silent grave—have not striven to imagine, to know, what was beyond, and to ascertain the state of those who, having fallen asleep in Jesus, have quitted the family circle? Where shall we get more light on this point than here? They passed away. There was no pain, no sound, no fear, no uneasiness. Where are they? How pleasant to find the veil lifted up and to hear Jesus speak: ‘To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.’ Paradise, a place of peace; Paradise, a place of rest, a place where the saints wait for the resurrection of the just; a paradise of joy, a paradise of pleasure, a place where Jesus is! Give me goodly company, there Jesus will be. Thus we are plainly told where the Christian after death will be—they shall ‘be with Me in Paradise;’ they shall be with the Lord, they see Him as He is, and enjoy His blessed presence. And says Jesus, ‘To-day;’ there is no uncertainty or delay in the offer of salvation, but, ‘To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise’—in a moment, on the brink of death, hell-deserving and

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wretched—yet coming by faith to Christ, feeling your need of forgiveness, and asking the merits of His precious blood, ‘To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.’ How precious both in life and death is the Gospel of Jesus! It comforts us here while on our pilgrim way, and, at the last, gives peace—peace here, and peace for ever with him in Paradise. Rest here, rest now; rest on the journey, rest through the Gospel of Jesus Christ! What can outrival this? A little pleasure? the applause of men? riches? rank, or fame? No, these cannot satisfy; there is nothing that can make us happy here; nothing can satisfy the cravings of an immortal soul but the precious blood of Christ. Lastly, for our example, let us learn to draw from this—What the thief on the cross did, we must do. It is not enough for us to come to this house of God, to join in the services of the Church, and to say Amen; it is not enough for us to have been baptized and to come to the Lord’s table. We must have personal dealings with Christ. He never changes. Come to Him boldly, and without delay; put your sins boldly before His face; say to Him—‘Here I am, Lord, with all my sins, think on me; look on me; pardon me.’ No one ever came to Him in vain.

BISHOP RYLE.

Light from the Darkness of the Cross.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. S. LUKE xxiii. 44-46.

THIS shrouding of nature as with a funeral pall, from whatever cause it came, gave visible expression to the deeper darkness of trial and sorrow under which the blessed Redeemer was then dying. It was the darkest hour the earth ever saw. It was what our Lord Himself described as the ‘hour and power of darkness.’ For light is always the best measure of darkness. It is when the shadow of the eclipse falls on the blaze of noon that a strange sense of horror falls on every creature, and the birds cower, and the beasts of the field are dismayed; and the gloom, just because of the previous light, appears deathly.

This holds with greater truth in things moral. It is the eye which most appreciates holiness that perceives most truly the foulness of the polluted. It is the pure who understand moral degradation; the coarse and depraved perceive it not. It was because Christ was light and love and purity, because He was good and holy as God

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Himself, that the sinfulness of the brother man was to Him more awful than crucifixion, and more bitter than death. It was the light that was in Him which made the darkness around appear so deep.

I. And in the midst of that great darkness Christ was being crucified; He was dying. He was there alone, deserted by every man. He was there apparently helpless, apparently vanquished. On His pure and loving spirit all iniquity met as upon a living altar. He bore it as His terrible burden. He measured its depth; He understood its horror; He tasted its death. But when it was at its very worst; when He had touched the lowest depth; when everything seemed to speak of defeat; when it almost seemed as if even God had forsaken Him, so far, far down had His Spirit sunk, so fearfully had the powers of darkness increased and thickened about Him and around Him; when every circumstance seemed to whisper the horrid doubt, 'If Thou art the Son of God, why does He not deliver Thee?'—then was it that, with one word of unshaken trust, He broke the dreadful spell. 'Father,' He said, 'into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.' His trust was vindicated. 'He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.'

This is also the Christian faith. This God in whom He trusted is our God for ever and ever. This faith which Christ had in God; this faith which He had in man, in spite of all that man is; this unshaken hope and confidence in the triumph of the good over the evil, of the light over the darkness; this vision of life in the midst of death—this is what is given to us for our faith also in all hours of perplexity or despair. It is that 'strong Son of God' whose Sonship no trial could shake; this 'Immortal Love' which no hatred could quench—this is He Whom we worship and adore.

When we say we believe in Christ, it surely signifies that we mean to get our thoughts of God, our thoughts of the world and of man—what they ought to be, what they may be and shall be—from Christ and from no one else. The Christian religion means this. It means that His faith in God shall be our faith. We may have our difficulties and our sore agony; we may be often tempted to doubt or to despair; but when we believe in Christ, we believe in a faith in God and man which neither sin nor death could quench. He who so beheld the joy of victory beyond the storm of battle, that 'He endured the cross and despised the shame,' will teach us to despise our own coward fears. We shall be able, when the burden weighs heaviest on our spirits, to rise into the triumphant thought that above the shadows there is light, that 'God is, and that with Him is no darkness at all'; yea, that through the confusions of earth and the mockeries of men, through death itself, with all its mysteries, there is a divine and glorious purpose of good being accomplished, and that

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Christ did not die in vain. His resurrection will gain new significance. And as we learn to believe in a Kingdom of God, that is righteousness and peace and joy, we shall learn also to believe in men, and to hope all things for them, because we believe in Him Who has conquered sin, and death, and hell; because we believe in a Father Whose name is love, and 'Whose will is that all men should be saved.'

D. MACLEOD.

Christ died for our Sins.

Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. 1 COR. xv. 3.

I. **W**HAT is the doctrine of the Atonement? We must speak with the deepest reverence, and with the consciousness of our own utter ignorance. We can trace the results of that Atonement; we insist upon the necessity of it; but when we try to explain the *rationale* of it, we feel there are deeper depths than any finite understanding can possibly fathom. The altar of old stood foursquare. What took place upon the eastern side was open and patent to all. There was the place of ashes (Lev. i. 16). The morning sun rose upon an accepted sacrifice, and the first thing the worshipper saw, as he entered the sacred courts, was that the Lord had turned to ashes, *i.e.* accepted (Ps. xx. 3), his burnt sacrifice. Yes, the eastern side of the altar was the place of acceptance and of peace. And so, as we approach the cross of Christ, we can see He has made peace by His blood. The sacrifice is accepted; man may draw near to God. As we move round to the north side of the altar, we can see what took place upon the northern side. There the sacrifice was slain (Lev. i. 11); there the victim suffered. And so, as we gaze upon the cross upon its northward aspect, we can mark somewhat of the sufferings of Jesus. 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow; rejected by My own; deserted by My disciples; betrayed by My companion. These are the wounds wherewith I have been wounded in the house of My friends.' Compassing the altar upon the southern side (Ezek. xlvii. 1), we can see a pure river of the water of life flowing forth, deepening as it flows, and going down into the desert, and making it bloom and blossom as a rose. And so, as we gaze upon the cross upon its southward aspect, we see the blessings that cross has brought to this poor desert world of ours. Wherever that river of life doth come, joy and peace and love spring up like flowers along its banks. But we are nowhere told what happened upon the westward side—the side towards the holy place—the Godward side. But there was a westward side; for constantly, in the Book of Leviticus,

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we are told the sacrifice was to be slain 'before the Lord.' Not simply before men, to show them the heinousness of sin, or that sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death; but before the Lord. But we are never told aught about that western side, except that when the priests approached that side they were to be careful not to let their nakedness appear. And it is when we approach that side we feel our own nakedness and ignorance the most.

The problem, therefore, before God—be it reverently spoken—seems simply to have been this: 'How can God be just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly?' Three conditions must be satisfied. First, justice must be satisfied; secondly, holiness must be encouraged; thirdly, love must be drawn forth. Now, it is generally on the ground of the first condition not being fulfilled that men presume to question the doctrine of the Atonement. They cannot conceive how it can be consonant with eternal justice to make one man suffer for another man; and I believe every thinking man must have a certain sympathy with this difficulty; and I have often heard the doctrine of the Atonement so stated—though I am bound to say more by its opponents than by those who believe it—that one's whole moral nature revolts at the selfishness and the injustice of it. God the Father is represented as an angry, vengeful God, just about to smite the miserable sinner at His feet, when the gentle Jesus interposes and receives the stroke instead; and we congratulate ourselves, and say it is expedient for us that one man die for the people, and that the whole people perish not. Oh, no! this is but a travesty of the Atonement. No; there are two things which must always be kept in view, if justice is to be satisfied by the suffering of a substitute.

II. First, the substitute must bear a certain relationship to the party inflicting the punishment. If the master had struck himself, it would have been a different thing. A little child was admitted into one of our hospitals. The young doctor saw the child's life depended upon the poison being sucked from the little child's throat, though he knew it was almost certain death to do so. He had no right to tell the nurse standing by to suck that tube; but he sucked the tube himself, caught the infection, and died; but England called him a hero who in the other case would have been a murderer. So St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 19) would have us never forget that God was in Christ, reconciling the world, not to some third person, but to Himself. Hold fast the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, or else I do not know what you can make of His Atonement. God could never have accepted the death of Gabriel, or of any angel, however immaculate, for the sins of a fallen world; but God was in Christ.

Secondly, the substitute must bear a certain relationship to the

ILLUSTRATIONS

sinner who deserves the punishment. The king, however innocent, suffers for his subjects' faults; the wife, however sober, suffers for her drunken husband. Now, I believe the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, by virtue of His Creatorship, bears a relationship to this world (Col. i. 15, 16), so that the defection of this world from righteousness, although everything which He had made, behold, it was very good, yet was, we may say, naturally visited upon Him. Now, viewed from this point of view, we see vicarious sacrifice upon every side of us; it seems to be one of the laws of our existence. The innocent wife suffers more on account of her husband's fault than even he does himself; the grief-stricken parent feels even more acutely than the prodigal boy the shame of his wrong-doing.

My sin affects even God Himself, and the consequences of my sin reach even to the throne of heaven; and therefore the cross of Christ not merely satisfies eternal justice, but also has this marvellous redemptive power, and I must hate the sin which caused this sorrow to my Lord.

E. H. STUART.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

*Predominance
of the Cross.*

DESCRIBING the artistic glories of the Church of St. Mark at Venice, Mr. Ruskin says: 'Here are all the

successions of crowded imagery showing the passions and the pleasures of human life symbolised together and the mystery of its redemption: for the maze of interwoven lines and changeful pictures lead always at last to the Cross, lifted and carved in every place and upon every stone; sometimes with the serpent of eternity wrapped round it, sometimes with doves beneath its arms and sweet herbage growing forth from its feet; but conspicuous most of all on the great rood that crosses the church before the altar, raised in bright blazonry against the shadow of the apse. It is the Cross that is first seen and always burning in the centre of the temple; and every dome and hollow of its roof has the figure of Christ in the utmost height of it, raised in power, or returning in judgment.'

*Never wither-
ing flowers.*

HEB. x. 23.

In the reign of Queen Mary of England, a man named Palmer was condemned to die. Before his death he was earnestly persuaded to recant, and among other things, a friend said to him, 'Take pity on thy golden years and pleasant flowers of youth before it is too late.' His beautiful reply was, 'Sir, I long for those springing flowers which shall never fade away.' When in the midst of the flame he exhorted his companions to con-

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stancy, saying, 'We shall not end our lives in the fire, but make a change for a better life; yea, for coals we shall receive pearls.'

The Cross. THE most consummate wisdom made choice of the cross, of poverty, and meanness.

Christ on the Cross. THERE is no more efficacious method of conquering all temptations, there is no more compendious way of gaining all the virtues, than perpetually to contemplate, affectionately to consider, diligently to wait upon, Christ hanging on the cross.

I SUPPOSE that the especial cross from which we are at this moment suffering always seems the very one from which we should most have shrunk. If, therefore, it needs the more courage and patience, then we may be sure the truer and better friend to us.

THE traitor was gone (S. John xiii. 31). His presence had been a restraint; and now that that spot in their feast of charity had disappeared the Master felt at ease; and like some stream out of the bed of which a black rock has been taken His words flow more freely. 'Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said.'

LIKE the pellucid waters of the Rhine and the turbid stream of the Moselle, that flow side by side over a long space, neither of them blending discernibly with the other, so the shrinking from the cross and the desire were coterminous in Christ's mind.

THE New Testament generally represents the cross as the very lowest point of Christ's degradation; S. John's Gospel always represents it as the very highest point of His glory. And the two things are both true; just as the zenith of our sky is the nadir of the sky for those on the other side of the world.

As the sun behind a cloud, which hides it from us, is still pouring out its rays on far-off lands, so Christ, veiled in dark sunset clouds of Calvary, sent the energy of His passion and cross into the unseen world, and made it possible that we should enter there.

As one who precedes a mighty host provides and prepares rest for their weariness, and food for their hunger, in some city on their line of march, and having made all things ready, is at the gates to welcome their travel-stained ranks when they arrive, and guide them to their repose; so Christ has gone before, our Forerunner, to order all things for us *there*.

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ALL His life long Christ had been revealing His heart, through the narrow rifts of deeds, like some slender lancet windows ; but in His death all the barriers are thrown down and the brightness blazes out upon men.

ALL through His life He had been trying to communicate the box of ointment exceeding precious, but when the box was broken the house was filled with the odour.

THERE blends, in that last act of our Lord's—for His death was His act—in strange fashion, the two contradictory ideas of glory and shame ; like some sky, all full of dark thunder-clouds, and yet between them the brightest blue and the blazing sunshine.

ALL His life long Christ was the light of the world, but the very noontide hour of His glory was that hour when the shadow of eclipse lay over all the land, and He hung on the Cross dying in the dark. At His eventide 'it was light,' and 'He endured the Cross, despising the shame' ; and, lo ! the shame flashed up into the very brightness of glory, and the very ignominy and the suffering were the jewels of His crown.

Sermons and Outlines for Passiontide and Holy Week

The Passover.

He kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood. HEBREWS xi. 28.



If it be true that the New Testament lies concealed in the Old; if it be true that the mysteries of Christ are to be found hidden in the law, there is nowhere where we should expect more to be taught about the great sacrifice of Calvary which earnest souls at this time struggle to make a reality to themselves, than in this particular instance to which I propose to call your attention for a moment or two now.

‘He kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood.’ Four hundred years had passed away since the momentous sacrifice of which we were thinking yesterday was offered to the eternal God; four hundred years during which the people who had little faith began to doubt whether God was going to be true to His promises. Just as people now who want faith say: ‘Where is the sign of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as at this day.’ Four hundred years; they went down into Egypt, down into the darkness. Another king arose who knew not Joseph, and by bitter service their lives were made a burden to them. And then came the glorious day of victory, the day when with a high hand God led them forth, brought them out of Pharaoh’s cruel tyranny, brought them forth bedecked with ornaments of silver and gold, brought them

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forth to lead them into that glorious country of inheritance which He had promised to Abraham long centuries before.

Certainly, in old times, nothing could be more touching than the yearly memorial of the Passover. There they came together, the father of the family, and his servants, and his household. Step by step he told them the story of how their fathers went down into Egypt, step by step he led them through the mysteries of the Paschal feast. And then when all was told of God's wonderful deliverance, one and all, it is said, they bowed their heads and worshipped. And if anywhere we are to see a distinct intimation of Calvary, there can be no such place better than this: 'He kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood.'

Let us look at it just in the same fashion that we looked at it yesterday. First, for a moment, let us look at it as illustrating Calvary Godward; then, let us look at it as illustrating Calvary as it practically applies to ourselves.

First, then, as it looks Godward. Who can look at all the moving incidents of the Passover without recognising of course that God in old times is pointing to that which you see before your eyes at the end of the cathedral, and Him crucified? 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' That is why the carved representation of the Passion is before our eyes, in order that we may shut our eyes and look away from it, and look to Calvary as the centre of all our hopes. The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ comes out, as we look Godward, in all these sacrifices that we are thinking about; but I say, most clearly it comes out in this sacrifice of the Passover. All our hope is in Calvary: our hopes to-day, while we are trying to be better men, and do our duty better, and be sorry for our sins, and lead consecrated lives. Our hope that the energy which comes from the Crucified will give us the power to be in Christ Jesus, leading the life that He would have us to lead; our hope in death when the shadows darken, and it is said, 'Ye have not passed this way heretofore'; the hope when our strength gives way and we are swooning in the mysteries of death, then out of our feebleness to throw ourselves into His arms, which are stretched there in order that He may embrace the world; our hope, so that into the darkness we may pass, knowing that He will be our strength. 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and the floods they shall not overwhelm thee: when thou passest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' Christ crucified: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' So in those words of St. Anselm—those golden words which most of us know so well, and if we know them not, we shall do well to learn them by heart—in his Admonitions to the

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Dying: 'Come then,' he says, 'while life remains in thee, place thy whole trust in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and no trust in anything beside. To this commit thyself wholly, with this wrap thyself all around, and if God wills to judge thee, say, "Lord, between Thy judgment and myself I put forward the death of our Lord Jesus Christ; no otherwise can I contend with Thee." If He shall say to thee that thou art a sinner, say, "Lord, I interpose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my sins and Thee." If He shall say that thou hast deserved damnation, say, "Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my evil deserts and Thee, and His merits I offer for the merits which I ought to have had, but have not." If He say that He is wroth with thee, say, "Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between Thy wrath and me."'

So much then from our story, looking Godward. Now, in conclusion, a word from the story of the Paschal sacrifice as we look practically towards ourselves.

First, the search. Ere the Paschal feast is celebrated the master of the house must search high and low in every cranny and corner. And what is he to search for? He is to search for leaven. 'No leaven shall be found in all thy quarters.' Leaven—it means disintegration; leaven—it means, in gospel language, sin; the one separating power between our souls and God.

The search. What are you doing, men, practically, now in Passiontide, before you come, please God, at Easter to your Easter communion? Oh, remember to search! 'Try me'—say it on your knees to-night, and each night in Passiontide—'Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart, prove me and examine my thoughts, look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, lead me in the way everlasting.' An honest search, with the light of the Holy Spirit to help us, a search into our lives, kneeling down and examining ourselves, by the rule of God's commandment. It is simple enough, just taking the Ten Commandments and seeing that we face them, and find how far we have been obedient to God's law. Will you do it? Self-examination—it means time, it means pains, it means the help of the Holy Spirit, it means confessing myself, not as other people see me, but as I am. An ugly picture—I quite grant it; one that you turn away from naturally—I quite allow it. And yet that is absolutely necessary if we are to apply to our souls the merits of Christ crucified. Self-examination—just to look at our lives and see, not only what we have done, but what we might have done and have left undone; an honest knowledge of my own heart, gained by the power of the divine Spirit in sight of Calvary—that is the meaning of the ceremony which seems so dull and lifeless, maybe, to the father of the family who searched for the leaven,—that is the meaning of it in

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gospel times. It means to you and me, that if the blood is to be applied to our souls, we must have the search—honest self-examination.

And secondly, the blood. Look at it. It is to be sprinkled on the two doorposts and on the lintel. There it is. you can picture it all to yourself, it is such a personal thing. It is no use listening to words about the Passion, it is no use singing,

‘When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,’

and feeling for a moment a desire to be better, and then the thought that we are better because we have the desire. It is no use coming and hearing the Passion music, and having tears rolling down the cheeks as we hear them sing most divinely, ‘He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.’ This is no good, unless personally we apply, by personal effort, the blood of sprinkling, the Paschal blood. Each one of us must feel we are personally sinners; each one of us must feel the personal application of His most precious blood. Out of the depth of a converted heart we must kneel down before Jesus Christ. Having made honest efforts, and united our efforts with the efforts of the divine Spirit, we must kneel down and say, ‘He loved me, and gave Himself for me.’

And it was to be sprinkled on the lintel, and on the door-posts, and none of it on the ground; just because He would teach us thereby the danger that you and I are in of trampling under feet the blood of the Son of Man. Oh, if we hear of the Passion, and read of the Passion, and know of the Passion, and yet turn and live the same decent, respectable lives that we should have led if the Passion had never been a living reality, once enacted before man and God, then we are like some miscreant who went up to Calvary when the Blood of salvation was spurting from the Crucified as He hung there, and, spitting into His sacred face, trampled His blood under feet. On the lintel and door-posts, but, thank God, and please God, not on the ground.

The search, the blood, and then, thirdly, the victim is to be roast with fire, not sodden at all. It is to be roast with fire,—what does that mean for me? If yesterday we thought of the fire in the Patriarch’s hand as meaning the energy of the divine Spirit in the Church, here let us look at the fire and see God speaking to you and to me, saying that we must go out and be enthusiasts. I once saw in Exeter Cathedral the tomb of a bishop, I think, and it said of him that he was an enemy of superstition, and so on; and then, it went on to say, of enthusiasm—superstition and enthusiasm. The word then was used in a restricted sense which it does not bear to-day, and yet

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one can think of the good man, leading just a quiet life, not doing too much, 'an enemy of superstition and enthusiasm.' Ah, but what about ourselves? Enthusiasm! there is plenty of it around us; enthusiasm about art and literature, enthusiasm about sports, enthusiasm about golf, enthusiasm about making money. There is no lack of enthusiasm to-day. And lo! from Calvary, to us assembled in this cathedral, Christ asks, 'Is there any enthusiasm for Me?' He points us to the saints, and He says, 'See what they have done.' The enthusiasm which won the world back from the devil's power was working mightily in their souls. Go out, men, go out and strive that we too may be enthusiastic for the spread of the gospel; give our energy and our time, in the office, amongst our fellow-clerks; give our money for the spread of the gospel; give anything, but, in God's name, give something. Whatever else you do, do not go down to the bottomless pit with your arms folded, simply going down with the stream. If you are anything, if Christianity is anything except a mere mockery, let the fire that consumed the Paschal sacrifice kindle in your soul a desire to be enthusiasts, not for sport only, not for art only, not for money, but for Him who died for us, that none of us should henceforth live for himself, that none of us may be content merely with keeping out of sin and leading a pure life, and not trouble other people at all, but that we each one of us should be a very centre of enthusiasm in whatever place God has bidden our lives to be led.

And there is one word more. There was the search, there was the blood, there was the fire, and then there was the haste. They were to eat it in haste—it is the Lord's passover. Their loins were to be girded and their feet shod. They were to eat it in haste—who could tell the moment when the angel of death should descend and the firstborn should be slain? And if—if the blood was not sprinkled on the door-posts and lintel, if they had not searched for the unleavened bread, if the preparations were not made, who could tell but that the angel who destroyed the Egyptians might destroy them? Is it an unnecessary lesson for us to end these simple thoughts of the Passover with? You have been called this Lent many a time, you have heard the voice of God, you have heard Him calling you to be a better man, and a different man, and to be enthusiastic, and to have your sins pardoned through the precious blood. And you want to be better. You do not want to live a grovelling, swinish life. Here is the message:—Lent is passing, Good Friday will be gone in a moment. We shall not be troubled with the story of the Passion again for twelve months. But oh, indeed it is true, since Lent and Passiontide and Good Friday are one of God's chiefest times for calling sinners home,—oh, indeed it is true that we should

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remember to eat it in haste, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Last Lent there were men sitting on the very seat that some of you are sitting on, who were moved for the moment, and if you had looked at them you would have seen them brushing a little tear away from their eyes, because their hearts were pricked; and now they lie buried in some neighbouring cemetery, and their day of grace is gone. Who can say which of us may be here next Passiontide, next Good Friday? Oh, eat it in haste to-day, while it is called to-day, not with good resolutions which pave the way to hell, but a real, honest conversion of the soul to God, a rendering up of ourselves and all that we have to Him, by His power and for His love.

T. BIRKETT DOVER.

Consecration.

A more excellent sacrifice. HEBREWS xi. 4.

WE stand to-day at the threshold of another Passiontide.

‘Royal banners forward go,
The Cross shines forth in mystic glow.’

That old Cross that has shone forth so often before, rough and rugged, but splendid with all the victories which it has accomplished, mighty to save still, as it has been through all the centuries. ‘The Cross shines forth in mystic glow’; and the ‘royal banners’ too, tattered and torn like some of those colours that you can see yonder in the cathedral, but speaking of splendid triumphs—the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, torn, suffering, ‘There is no whole part in Me, I am feeble and sore smitten’—unfurled and lifted high once more, bidding God’s people ‘onward, onward, triumph,’ if only they will be true to His Cross.

This is Passiontide. Time was when people did not give much heed to Passiontide. Thank God, more and more people are using it for His glory now. And we are business people here, and busy people too. So may I say just one word before I commence what I want to speak this morning, one word about a businesslike way of keeping Passiontide? What we want is to make Passiontide a tremendous reality, is it not, to our own soul? to say ‘He loved me and gave Himself for me,’ and not only say it, but feel it tremendously? How shall we set to work if we want to be businesslike? Surely thus—morning by morning to take some one incident out of the Passion,

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and get it crisp and clean before our eyes ; something simple, just like this—‘ The Lord turned and looked on Peter,’ and then kneel down, if it is only for a moment, and ask the Lord that He will impart that one thought, His eye, which was turned on Peter and brought him to repentance, and turn it upon me. And then take that thought as you come into this noisy city, keep it there before your mind, turn it into a prayer. Say, ‘ O blessed Jesus, turn Thine eye upon me and melt my soul into penitence.’ Or take such a verse as—‘ I am feeble and sore smitten : I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart,’ and carry it with you all day long, and read it again on your knees at night, and bless God because in the midst of all your business you have been able to think of the Passion of the Lord. And try as far as possible, in your business life, to be quiet all through the day ; to give up, at any rate, all stupid chatter which does no one any good, and drives the thought of the Passion from the mind. Creep here into the church, or some other church, and get a moment of quiet meditation. Thus go on all through the days of Passion Week, all through the days of Holy Week, and then when you come here or elsewhere to your Good Friday’s devotion, please God, the Passion being but a businesslike thing, brought home to ourselves in a businesslike way, the Passion, please God, will have had result in our soul in an altered life.

Now, what should we talk about these few days of Passiontide ? I think, if one opens one’s Bible, from the first chapter of Genesis right on to the end of Malachi, what strikes one so wonderfully is that you cannot turn to any page or any line but you see a prefiguration of the Passion of the Lord. So I want just to take for a moment each day some of the more obvious references to the Passion, the Sacrifice of the Cross, some of the Old Testament stories which, if you want really to understand, you must read in the glowing splendour of the light which flows from the Lamb of God lifted up on Calvary.

So, to-day, look at this one which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings before us. ‘ A more excellent sacrifice.’ He is speaking of the sacrifice, of course, which Abel offered, and the sacrifice which was offered by Cain,—the one accepted, the other rejected. There are just three particulars to which I desire to call your attention, and would ask you, if you will, to think of and meditate upon. First of all, there is the lesson that is taught us by the name. Adam, driven out of Eden with his wife, the angel at the entrance to the garden whirling round the sword which is to keep our first parents from the joys which they have lost. I care not whether it was a real angel or a real sword ; at any rate, I know that there was something which made it impossible for them to enjoy the bliss which was

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theirs by God's creation. And then the mother of all living gives birth to a son, and she calls him Cain. These were days when people used to give their children names, not because they sounded pretty, or because of some mere earthly reason, but the name was to represent some tremendous truth. She called him Cain, which means acquisition, possession, something that you have got. And the Bible goes on to say, she called him Cain, 'for I have gotten a man from the Lord.' That is to say, in all the misery of the situation, banished from Eden, there was just that one bright spot of the promise, 'the woman's seed should destroy the serpent's head.' And when the mother of all living gives birth to her first-born son, she thinks she has given birth to the Lord our Righteousness, and she has given birth to a murderer. She has made a tremendous mistake. She calls him a possession. Time goes on, and her second child is born. Well, she gives him a name that means something. She calls him 'Vanity' or Abel. Little did she think at first or know of all the centuries of sadness and darkness which would intervene before the Redeemer would come to Zion. But she found out her mistake. The thing that she thought was a possession, that belonged to her, that was worth having, she found to be but vanity. 'Every man living is altogether vanity.' There is our first lesson, when we look at the Cross of Calvary. It is this lesson, the lesson we have been taught so often, and we are so slow to learn, that all the things that we have and call our own, 'that they with their houses should continue for ever, and call the land after their own name'; all the things that we have, our health, our money, our time, all these things that we delight in and think to be our own, they are no possessions at all, until we have taken them to the Cross of Calvary and placed them in the pierced hands of Jesus, and then taken them back to use for His glory, to use just as long as He leaves them to us, and then, when the time has come to give them back, to give up our money, to give up our children, to give up our lives, because we have learned the blessed lesson of detachment—such a hard lesson to learn, the lesson that nothing is vain if it be in the Lord, that all our work and all our loves and all our plays, they are of God, and that our life is not wasted if only we have crept to Calvary and placed them in His hand and taken them back, resolved to live worthy of His calling. That is the first lesson, detachment; our possessions nothing until we have put them in the pierced hands of the Lord and received them back from Him.

And the second lesson from this story—the sacrifice. It was just outside the garden, somewhere near the gate, I suspect, where the angel was guarding the way. There was reared up the altar, the great altar in process of time, in the end of days. On some great

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feast day, Adam is there to receive the offerings, as the priest. There comes Cain. Cain—what does he bring? He brings a basket of summer fruits—he was a tiller of the ground. He presents them to Adam. Adam places them on the altar—there they remain. Comes Abel—who was a shepherd. He brings the firstling of his flock. He takes the knife, and the wound is made, the bleeding victim lies upon the altar, and lo! the fire of God descends and wraps itself round and round the bleeding victim, until the victim is consumed, and Abel knows that his sacrifice is accepted, Cain knows his sacrifice is rejected. But why? that is the question for us—why? Just for this reason: obviously and chiefly because Abel gives of the best. Cain thought anything was good enough for God. These summer fruits—the bloom was off them, or they were some vegetables from his garden that were frostbitten; as we say, there was no sale for them in the market. He thinks anything will do for God: Cain gave anything; Abel gave his best. And Abel, too, approached with the shedding of blood, and bore witness to his faith in the blood of ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’

Our Passiontide lesson here is that God demands our best. Oh, say you, anything will do for God. God won’t have ‘anything,’ and won’t accept it. Oh, that, as we look at His best offered on Calvary, we might learn the lesson! for His best is there. Look, look at Him, hanging there before your eyes. He is the best, He is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person. And it is only because Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, is best, that, therefore, His sacrifice is accepted to take away the sins of the world.

But what about ourselves? Just this, that He demands our best. And as we kneel around and look at His best offered on the Cross, men, offer the best of your lives to Him. There are young men here, just come into this noisy city, with all the power of sin, and the devil to tempt them away from God: He asks your best. Now, when you are young and strong, He asks you to go into the midst of this city, and be the salt of the earth. Our best only; not just anything will do for God. Not remnants, as you go into a shop at sale-time and say, ‘Have you got a good remnant?’ Ah, God does not want our remnant, and He won’t accept it. Our best—it is not worth having when it is given,—our best time, our best wealth, the best years of our lives, the best time of our day on Sunday, early in the morning, a little sacrifice to Communion, the best of our week, Sunday sanctified by giving God back His day, giving Him our service and consecrating the whole week by a Sunday well spent, which ‘brings a week of content.’ Yes, if we are really businesslike in this Passiontide, we will get on our knees, and, ashamed of ourselves because we have given to God so poorly, so shabbily, in

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comparison with the way in which He has given Himself for us, in comparison with the way in which the saints glorified Him by their offering, we will, I say, kneel down and promise Him, as the result of a businesslike Passiontide, that we will henceforth strive to give Him our best.

One word more. First, there are the names, teachings, detachments; then there is the unaccepted offering and the more excellent sacrifice, teaching us that God wants a man's whole powers and gifts to be consecrated to Him. Then there is one other word to remember, and that is, 'the blood of the righteous Abel,' the blood with which the ground was soaked when the first murderer slew his brother. And who was Abel? Abel was a shepherd who tended his sheep, and it was a brother's blood. Oh, on your knees, dwell on these two thoughts, for indeed, they point to Calvary! He who hangs there is our Shepherd true. He has sought us and He has bought us, and, thank God, He has found many of us. He is the Good Shepherd and loves your soul. He is the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul. And He is your brother. Our Brother at birth He becomes. He can save us if He will, for He is God. He will save us if He can, for He is man.

T. BIRKETT DOVER.

The Offering of Isaac.

By faith . . . he . . . offered up his only begotten son. HEBREWS xi. 17.

THIS is the most marvellous faith that the world has ever known, or that you can find in the Bible, save one exception, when Mary, the handmaid of the Lord, received the message from Gabriel, God's archangel, and she bowed her head and said, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.' That was the greatest instance of faith, and next to that comes the faith which the Apostle is speaking of in the text, when he says, 'By faith he offered up his only begotten son.'

Anticipations of the Passion in the Old Testament. yesterday we stood before the gates of Eden, and as we saw the rejected sacrifice and the accepted sacrifice, at least we learned this lesson, that God, if He is going to accept anything from us, must have our best. Now, to-day we go on just as far from the gates of paradise as you and I stand now from the Cross of Christ. Wellnigh two thousand years have passed, and we pass from the gates of Eden to the Mount of Vision; or rather, before we get to the Mount of Vision and try and learn our lesson, we will go further back still. The history of this man of faith was so wonderful that he could be called 'the friend of God.' What does S. Stephen say about him? He says that the God

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of glory appeared to Abraham when he was dwelling in Mesopotamia before he came to Haran. That was when he was with his father in the heathen land. That was the first call, and he obeyed it. He went, but he went with his father. The sacrifice then was only, you may say, in its inception. When his father died, then came God's other call, 'Get thee out of the country and thy father's house, leave everybody, leave the place where you are so well known, and go out, a stranger into a strange land, not knowing what will befall you, or where you will go, but go just because you are called.' And he went, and God led him to Canaan, and there, we know that almost the first thing that this man did was to build an altar. And as you read the story over and over again, always, everywhere he was building an altar, because in his soul there was so strongly expressed the truth, that God can only be approached by sacrifice. Then came the time of weary waiting: God had promised him a son, and that through his seed Christ the Saviour of the world should be born. He was an old man, and still God did not fulfil His promise. Five-and-twenty years he must wait, and at last, when this friend of God is a hundred years old, and Sarah is ninety years old, a child is born. Pass on, then, till we get just the particular point which I want to dwell upon for a moment or two now. The child is given, the child grows up. Some of us, perhaps, know the love that circles round an only child. Multiply that a thousandfold, and then you will understand the love of this old man to the child of his old age. Then comes the call, so prompt, so sharp, so sure. No one can mistake it. In the visions of the night it comes, when least, perhaps, he was expecting it. 'Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him up upon a mountain which I will show thee of.' We know the rest: how the old man rose up early in the morning, how he went with his son and with the instruments of his son's passion in his hand, how at last he said to his attendants that they were to wait below, 'and I and the lad will go yonder and worship.' We know the rest of the story. 'Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering.' 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for the burnt offering.' Up, up, up, to the very top of the mountain; the knife glittering in his hand, the son over whom his bowels yearned with tenderness stretched upon the wood, and as he lifts the knife to heaven the voice of God from on high is heard, saying, 'Abraham! Abraham!' and bidding him withhold his hand from that which love to God, which ever must be greater than our love to the creature, had bade him do.

Such is the story. And how does it affect us in Passiontide? Well, we must look at it two ways. First, of course, as we meditate upon it, we must dwell upon the lessons which it has as you

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look Godward towards your Good Friday Cross; and then, because it is, comparatively speaking, profitless merely to look Godward unless we look also to our own lives, our own selves, we must look at the story as it applies to us.

First, then, as it applies to God. Surely the lesson that a meditation upon this sacrifice will bring home to us is, first of all, the amazing great love of God, who 'so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' 'The love of the Father towards man—that is the point which the Holy Ghost would bring out as we dwell upon the love of Abraham towards Isaac. When we talk about the Son of God we use, of course, merely language of accommodation, merely some human relationship to express the ineffable relationship betwixt the Father and the Son; but yet it brings home to us the love of the Father towards His Child. Some, perhaps, in the cathedral have known what it is to watch over and pray over little children, when we have thought they were going to be taken from us, children whom we loved as our own soul. We have known how the heart went out as we saw the little thing in its helpless suffering, and we have known what a father's love towards a child is. Nay, more, some of us, if we have had to discipline children, if we have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against us, as so often, alas! happens—you have known as a parent how hard it is to inflict suffering upon your child, simply because it is a struggle between love and duty, inclination and duty. And then to inflict suffering, as it were voluntarily, upon our child; to do it, not for his own good, but for the good of his people, or for the good of his nation,—which father amongst us would be strong enough and brave enough to do that?

And so we look from Calvary. We look to the love of the Eternal Father, so wonderful! we cannot understand what that love between the Father and the Eternal Son was—'Being the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person'—only we know that it was a thousand times stronger, a thousand times more marvellous and intense than the love of a man towards his son. 'He gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' 'Sacrifice and meat offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared for me.' Yes, 'In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure': no pleasure had God in anything else save to see His own Son come down and be born of Mary; no pleasure in anything else save to see the Son of His love a wanderer and an outcast, spat upon, torn till there was no whole part in Him; no pleasure in anything else save in the crushing and the degradation, in the agony and in the Cross of His eternal Son. In naught else had the Eternal Father pleasure, because of His intense love to us.

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And then there is one other point out of many that, of course, we could dwell upon in meditating upon this sacrifice of the only begotten son, and that is the unity of will and purpose betwixt the father and the son. 'I and the lad will go yonder and worship.' They went both of them together. If Isaac knew, if his father whispered to him something of the sacrifice that he was about to make, the lad was willing to make it. 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God.' I am content to do it. But the will was one, the will to win back the world to God.

And then, in conclusion: looking at the story, not merely Godward, although chiefly as speaking of that which no one preaching can explain, that which can only be explained when we get on our knees and shut our eyes and make our mind dwell upon it in quietness and all alone;—besides that—that lesson about the love of God and the oneness of the will of Jesus Christ and the Father—there are the lessons of the story as it affects us.

And these, at any rate, shall be chiefly two. First, the whole meaning of the story is this: God is not calling Abraham to sacrifice his son, God is calling Abraham to surrender, to self-surrender, to surrender his own will. And that is the Passiontide lesson which I would earnestly impress upon myself and upon you now, the real need of true self-surrender. And see how this story tells us that Abraham was not called upon to the full act of self-surrender all at once. First, there is the call to Haran, when he is with his father and with his friends. Then there is the call to the land that he knows not of. Then at last there is the call to take his son, his only son, and offer him up for a sacrifice. You and I, if we are to be inheritors of the saints in light, you and I must be men of self-surrender. Ah, but you say, that is impossible. I cannot give myself up absolutely to God. Nay, He does not ask it this morning. God is so wonderful, that just as with Abraham, so with us, He takes us step by step. For instance, there is a man sitting down in the cathedral there who came in merely by chance. He did not know that there was a sermon, he did not know that the Passion of the Lord was going to be preached at all. And thus to him the call comes. God asks you to surrender yourself. God will not be content until you have absolutely surrendered that which you love most—yourself. He says, I cannot. I see the saints. I see what they have done. I see the heights of glory to which they have attained, but it is too far for me. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it. No, dear friend, it is not that. That is not the way He is going to deal with you. No. To the stranger who came in He looks from His cross and says, 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?' 'You passers-by in S. Paul's Cathedral, is it

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nothing to you,' He cries, 'and all that it means?' and you say, 'Nothing; I care not for it.' And there He hangs so patiently, and His spirit tries to bring His love to your heart, and all He asks for is that you should take one little step, a passer-by that you are, from mere indifference to the Passion, to sympathy and sorrow because He is suffering so much. And if you go that step and learn to think a little bit more, then He will call you, perhaps, another step from sympathy to love. He will say, 'This have I done for thee; what hast thou, passer-by, done for me?' And you by the grace of the divine Spirit, if you are true to your vocation, will take the second step from mere sympathy to love. And then it will not rest there, but, at last, you will go on step by step, and then He will say to you, as He says to us all in the last resort, 'My son, give Me thine heart.' That is, then, the first lesson for us, self-surrender. Do not be afraid of it, do not draw back. He will be gentle with you, He is not rough as we are one with another. He will be tender. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.' Do not be afraid. If you will only follow, you at last will be able to say, 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'

And then there is one other lesson, in conclusion, as the story affects us ourselves, and that is, the means by which God brings about this self-surrender. And there, too, behold the fire and the knife. He went and 'took the fire in his hand, and a knife.' Ah, we cannot do it without the fire. If we want, this Passiontide, really to have an altered life, we must trust more than we have ever done before the fire of God, the Holy Ghost. Pray to Him now if you have a moment before you leave. Pray to-night as you are saying your evening prayer: 'O fire of God, come into my heart and quicken it, so dead and lifeless as it is. Help me, who cannot help myself, by Thy power to give myself to the crucified Lord.' You will not ask in vain. The Holy Spirit is the fire, and the Holy Spirit has made all the saints to be what they are, and He can take the most worthless sinner here, and He can do for him as He has done for sinners a thousand times before—He can convert him into a saint.

And the knife—ah, do not let us be afraid of the knife; just the discipline. We have been trying perhaps, some of us, to learn a little about discipline in this Lenten Passiontide. It is a good thing in a world that eats and drinks and says, 'To-morrow we die'; in a world that knows nothing of the meaning of the Litany words, 'By Thy fasting and temptation, by Thy Cross and Passion, good Lord, deliver us.' It is good if we have been learning the A B C of self-denial this Lent. Only here is the lesson, the final lesson. Let us take the knife. Let us suffer—it is the way to glory. Let us bruise our hearts, let us cut ourselves freely, as it were, to the quick

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with the knife of God's discipline. And day by day the old man will die down within us, and the new man will rise up, just as the trees in this springtide—when the worthless branches have been lopped off and gone—out they come, first the buds of promise, then the green leaf, and then the splendid flower.

So will it be with us, only we must be real about it. Business men and busy men must make the work of their salvation busy and a business thing. And what I say to you is, that if you want to get self-surrender do not fail to ask with all your soul for the fire of the Spirit, do not fail to apply to yourself, trusting only in the Passion of the Lord, the knife of the discipline of God.

T. BIRKETT DOVER.

The Priesthood of Christ.

King of Salem, priest of the most high God. HEBREWS vii. 1.

I SUPPOSE, of all the foreshadowings which we see in the Bible of the Passion of our divine Lord, none is more inspiring and helpful to the devout soul than a contemplation of Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God. Wonderful the story was. There was old Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, victorious in the slime-pits, and as he comes near home out comes this strange Melchisedec. So lonely, so different from everybody else that we read of in the Bible, without beginning of days or end of years. Out he comes, and then brings forth bread and wine and blesses Abraham, receives from Abraham tithes, and that is all we know of him. And yet I say it is one of the most comfortable foreshadowings of the Passion. Because of course we know, even if St. Paul had not told us so, we know quite well that he is the figure of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Priest after the order of Melchisedec. And the comforting thought for us men is this, that He whose Passion we are commemorating to-day is evermore our priest before the Father's throne, that He is eternal God, and His years have no end. It is His divine nature and human nature. He is ever at the Father's side, interceding for us, and His prayer must be heard just because He is both God and man.

Now, let us look at the subject just in the same way as we have been trying to look at these other anticipations of the Passion. First of all, let us look at it Godward, then let us look at it as it touches ourselves. First, looking at it Godward: as we look at each detail of the sorrowful Passion; as next week, step by step, we follow Jesus Christ, until we see Him nailed to Calvary,—what will strike us again and

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again is the hopeless degradation of the whole situation. There He is made 'a worm and no man, a very scorn of men, and an outcast of the people.' There He is not only numbered with transgressors, but put below transgressors, a murderer chosen in His stead. And as we look at Him all alone, wherever we look—whether we look at Him in the agony under the olive-trees of Gethsemane, and see the ground all around bedewed with the Saviour's blood, or whether we look at him forsaken by S. Peter or derided by Herod's soldiers, it matters not which page of the Passion we look at—what strikes us is the utter degradation of the situation. And yet we sing in the *Te Deum*, 'Thou art the King of glory, O Christ,' and we do well to remind ourselves as we pass through the various parts of the Passion, that He is never more King of glory than when He is travelling through the sorrows of His Passion, and when He is fastened to the Cross of Calvary. 'Thou art the King of glory, O Christ.' 'Who is He that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?' 'He that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength.' 'I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save,' the royal power of Jesus Christ, even in His Passion giving to His precious blood its infinite merit and satisfaction. And our Priest of endless power, like Melchisedec, no longer within the veil offering a bloody sacrifice, yet evermore, night and day, through all the ages, presenting to the Father the Passion which He endured once, and once for all, on Calvary. There He is, our Priest of endless power, knowing the most intimate secrets of our life, loving us as our Brother, and showing forth His death evermore at God's right hand. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' These are the three points, shall we say, Godward, that this story has: first, the divine power of Him who is travelling in the greatness of His strength, who is mighty to save because He is God; secondly, His kingship: He is seated on the Father's throne; thirdly, His priesthood: He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

And now, looking practically towards ourselves, see how this story just gets in at the very front of Lent, to which we have come. Abraham is returning—what from? From the slaughter of the kings. And where? In the level valley which was full of slime-pits, in the level valley where it was so hard to have a fair fight. And is it not so, please God, with us, and with most of us here? We are, as it were, returning from the slaughter of the kings. We have been using our Lent, if we have been using it at all, in order to destroy, by God's grace, the powers of the devil within. And we have been in the slime-pits. Our sins are so shabby, our sins do so degrade the nobility of our manhood, we have had such a difficult task to overcome them. We, like Abraham, are returning now at this Passiontide from the

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slaughter of the kings in the slime-pits. Out comes our true Melchisedec, Jesus Christ our Lord, and meets us in His Passion. What is it that he says to us? First of all, He says, I am your King. He is King of righteousness, demanding of us righteousness in our lives; that we should go back to our lives and live them quite differently, that God's righteousness should be the rule of our life. He comes to us to say, 'I am the King of righteousness.' Then when obedience to conscience means great sacrifice on your part, then He will be not only the King of righteousness, but the King of peace. He will give you a strange mysterious peace which the world knows nothing of, the peace of God which passeth all understanding. That is the word that He says. 'I am your King.' Men, kneel down, before you leave the church, and say to Him, as you see Him crowned with many crowns upon His throne, say to Him, 'Thou art my King, O Lord Jesus Christ. My allegiance to Thee has been faulty, my loyalty has been poor, but Thy Passion, Thy sorrow, Thy love, the miracles that Thou hast wrought among the saints, they have conquered me, O Lord. I will go back, not hysterically, not merely crying out sympathetically, but I will go back in a businesslike way, as a business man. Thou, Lord Jesus on Thy throne, who didst travail through the sorrows of Thy pain for me, "Thou art my King, O God, send help unto Jacob." That is the first message; our Melchisedec meeting us, at this point, says, 'I am Thy King.'

And He is our Priest too. He comes to us and says, 'I am thy Priest.' Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine. And on this day in Passion Week, when we think of that mysterious hour when our Priest, who ever liveth for us, took into His sacred hands the bread, and brake it, and the cup, and blessed it,—on this day, surely we do well to remind ourselves, that not only there in heaven in His bodily presence, but here on earth, He is our Priest, and that He brings forth bread and wine. He gave us the comfortable sacrament of His body and His blood, so that mystically He shows forth on earth that which in His own natural presence He doth in heaven. Why was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained? For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ. Yes, thank God that we can come in these holy mysteries, and really bring to God an acceptable gift. Thank God that in these holy mysteries we can have union with Him and union with the elect, made one with Him and He with us. Here is the message our Melchisedec gives to you. He bids you come and feast with Him at your Easter communion. You say, 'I am not worthy.' But why not become worthy? Why not, by God's mercy, make your peace with God? Oh, come to your communion feast; understand that coming to Christ in Lent and Passiontide, unless it ends in devout communion with

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of purity. You, my sceptical friend, who doubt the divinity of our Lord, who doubt the divine origin of Christianity, you have to explain this,—why since then and not before then we are able to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

I ask myself, what sight was it which the world saw then which changed it? And, first, it seems to be this, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took a human body. ‘A body hast Thou prepared Me.’ We are familiar, are we not, with the accusation brought against religion that it takes an unnatural view of life? Doubtless the realism in art and literature is to-day a reaction against what is understood to be the unnatural teaching of priests and mystics. Whatever may be said of Christ’s representatives, no one can say that of Christ. He took a body, He took a human body with all its cravings, with all its longings, with all its nerves, with all its feelings. He took it, He wore it, and He wears it still, and by wearing it He blesses the life of the body, He blesses human homes, He blesses the workman as he works to get and keep his home, He blesses innocent pleasure, He blesses marriage, He blesses the pure joys of home. Oh, you who think that you cannot follow Jesus Christ because the Christian religion is an unnatural religion, I point you to the first sight which astonished the Roman world—‘Behold the man.’

But, secondly, there was another sight, a greater miracle which swept through the veils of sophistry of those days as it sweeps through the veils of sophistry to-day. You know the man who works hard by in some of these factories, you know the man who tells you you are only following nature when you sin, you know the fellow-clerk, what he whispers in your ears, that the body of man who has a body is bound to sin—you know it. What clove through the sophistries in the days of ancient Rome? What is it which cleaves through them to-day? Why, it was this, that Christ wore the body without sin—without sin. You in the workshop, you take your choice between your fellow and Christ to-day. He says that vice is natural, Christ says it is unnatural. He says you can only be a manly man when you sin, Christ says go with Him and He will show you death. ‘Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not of the things that be of God but of the things that be of man.’ And I point you, therefore, in the second place, to the second sight which for ever nailed the devil’s lie to the counter—‘Behold the sinless man.’

But even then the sights which the world had seen would not have been sufficient to have staunched that old and running wound. Was there anything further which Christ showed the world which had the power, one by one in the case of all men who believed it, to turn back the tide of human passion? Yes. There was one more sight, and it

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was this. Men looked for an innocent man. They looked to see what had become of the sinless man, and to their horror they saw Him on the Cross. Great philosophers like Plato—they had prophesied that it would be so. They had prophesied that when the perfect man came the world would put Him to death. But none the less when we as members of humanity look for the innocent man, it is to our horror we find Him on the Cross. To our horror we look up in Holy Week, we see Him hanging there in front of us, plainer every day, till Good Friday comes and we see,—horrible, horrible, horrible is the sight we see. And the answer comes back from heaven, That is what God thinks of your sin.

Yes, that was the sight which burned itself into the conscience of the world. 'God, in that the law was weak, sent forth His Son as an offering for sin, and condemned sin in the flesh.' He condemned it in a way that no one can mistake. He hung it up between earth and sky. He hung it up like a curse for men and angels to see, and it was that that for ever put the damnation on sins of the flesh.

And so one by one since that time men have looked up to the Cross; they have looked up at it, they have grown very solemn, and then slowly they have taken their old nature, they have put it on the Cross, they have driven the nails through its hands and feet and left it there to die. And when it has come down from the Cross they have taken it with its passions and its lusts, they have put it on the Cross again, they have driven the nails through its hands and feet again, and left it again there to die. And that is what S. Paul means when he says, 'I am crucified with Christ.' That is what S. Paul means when he says, 'They that are in Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts.'

And the first question then, this Holy Week, that I look you in the face and ask is no rhetorical question, but one which ought to go and does go into the very hearts and consciences of us all: Have we taken this first elementary step which the Cross demands? Have we crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts?

But, I hear some one say, this is the very teaching we object to. This is the very doctrine we accuse Christianity of teaching. This is slavery, this is morbid slavery that you preach. Slavery!—why, the experience of eighteen centuries answers back, This is the only way to freedom! When, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian was passing along, and being shown the various sights which make up human experience, he came to a man who was in a cage biting his nails with remorse. He asked who he was. Who art thou, poor mortal, he said, who art thou, caged in this cage for ever? And he answered back, I am a man who in my youth threw the reins on the neck of

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my passions, and therefore am I in this cage. He found that so-called freedom was the way to slavery. Get upon the steed, put the bit in his mouth, hold the strong reins in strong hands of a man instead of being dragged by the reins along the ground through the mire, ride upon the horse and use him as a servant and not a master, and you stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free.

Or take again the so-called freedom of the drinking man. I shall never forget an incident in a mission not so long ago. The sermon had been on a chain which a tyrant had given the slave to make. When he had made the chain and brought it back, he was told to make it longer. And a man came up, not a working-man, but a man who called himself a gentleman. Directly after the sermon I entered his house. He came towards me with a brandy bottle in his hand, and he said, 'This is my chain,' and he cast it down to pieces at my feet. Freedom! If it was only the lower classes, as people call them, one might not have to preach such a sermon here; but is it not our experience that in every class of life the slavery is very much the same? Or perhaps it is temper. We have seen men and women who seem to have lost the whole control of their lives. Their homes are miserable and their children are wretched because they are under the curse of a temper which they cannot tame. I say, put it on the Cross. It is a simple lesson. It is the curse of your life. Put it on the Cross, that old nature—it is the only place for it—to die, and then, and then only, can you be free. Let Easter morning dawn upon our old nature crucified on Jesus Christ's Cross and buried in His grave, and it will be the prelude to a brighter morning that shall usher in the dawning splendours of an endless day.

A. F. WINNINGTON INGRAM.

Glorying in the Cross.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross. GALATIANS VI 14.

IS it too much of a paradox to say that the last thing we ordinary Englishmen glory in, in our natural moments, is the Cross? Here we are gathered together for a brief half-hour, out of the midst of our business life or of our pleasures. What is it, as a matter of fact, that we are glorying in at this moment? Let us be perfectly honest at a time like Holy Week, in the presence of the Cross. Near to the Cross, we must be perfectly honest with ourselves, otherwise we do no good to our souls at all. What is it that at this moment or as you came up here to this cathedral—what was it that you were glorying in in your heart of hearts? One perhaps was glorying

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that he had made a successful stroke in business this morning. One was glorying that he had been promoted to a greater position of trust. Another, whose strength might be the strength of an athlete, might have had his mind turning back to Saturday last when he won some triumph for his club.

Or if we look a little deeper—and we must dwell on this because the test of character is what we glory in—what is the image which comes most often before the horizon of our minds? What is it that we think of in the silent hours of the night, or what do our thoughts turn to in the early morning? What is it that fills up as it were the horizon of our minds in our leisure moments? Is it not the picture of some one whom we know by sight, some one very like ourselves, only famous, rich, an influence, a striking power in the community? Is not that the thing we glory in in our leisure moments, the gifts which we expect to make us something like that? Or—(for we will be just to ourselves)—even in our better moments—(for we are not always egoistical)—what in our better moments is our glory, we Englishmen? Is it not often that we are Englishmen? Do we not glory that we are freeborn Britons? Do we not glory in the traditions of our country? Do we not glory in living in an enlightened age? The contempt, the kindly contempt, which so many of us have for foreigners, is only surpassed by the sublime contempt with which we look back on the last century.

Now, with much of this S. Paul would be in sympathy. We trace, surely, do we not, a touch of honest pride when S. Paul says, 'I am a man of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city'? We trace a touch of honest pride when, as one says, 'For a great sum I obtained this freedom,' 'but I,' says S. Paul, 'was free-born.' He never would have gloried in his gifts in the sense that he would be proud or conceited of them. He would know, and he tells us only too clearly, that they were gifts, things given him, things it was childish to be proud of. We think it childish of our children to be proud of a new coat, or a new hat. But still surely we misread him, if we do not see in him a pride of honest work, a pride in doing a thing well. He would have considered the old philosopher right who said that pleasure was the bloom of a successful knowledge. Whether it was tent-making, or whether it was writing letters, or whether it was framing his sermons, he took a pride in honest work.

What, then, is the meaning of this tremendous saying, which this humanly educated patriot uses when he says, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross'? The Cross, then, must have had some tremendous ministry, it must have told S. Paul something so fundamental and so overwhelming as to make all these other innocent and natural glories as nothing in comparison.

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What was it? And, first, it seems to be this: it told S. Paul as he looked at the Cross that he, the man Saul who was also called Paul, that he was of immeasurable value in the sight of God. Novelists and poets have painted to us the strange, overwhelming exultation which passes over the heart of a woman when she realises that she is the object of the love of the man she loves; and, conversely, the glory which passes over the heart of a man when he realises that he is singled out and loved by the woman he worships at a distance. So with pure, noble natures like S. Paul it seemed to overwhelm him—overwhelmed him with the extraordinary condescension, overwhelmed him with the extraordinary greatness of the thought that the Almighty God, Maker of heaven and earth, in whose hands all things were held, who held twenty million flaming suns flaming round Himself with perfect ease—that by such a one as God he was singled out, welcomed, and spoken to. ‘He loved me and gave Himself for me,’—you hear S. Paul repeating it to himself as he goes from market-place to market-place in Europe. ‘He loved me and gave Himself for me.’ It was the master motive of his life.

Now, it may seem an almost impossible thing to us, but this is certain, we never shall have any spring in our religion, we never shall have a master motive, a master light for our seeing, religion will be always more or less a burden to us, it never will give the spring it gave to S. Paul, if we do not realise that God loves us one by one. I remember one day I had a dying boy in front of me. He seemed to be unable to take in or realise the truths of religion. I knelt down by his side and said this in his ear time after time, ‘God loved you, Christ loved you and gave Himself for you,’ and at last he died with a smile upon his lips. And it was because Christ told S. Paul this, because he looked upon the Cross, and in the Cross alone did believe, that he says, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross.’

But, secondly, there was another message in that Cross which went home to S. Paul. When we met him in history he had the world at his feet. He was the rising young man of his party, and he had an ambition before him which the world might envy. What was it that caused him to count this as but dung that he might win Christ? What so splendid as that ambition of being popular and honoured and respected in his life? Again, it was the Cross. It told him this. It told him that it was right to be ambitious, but that there was an ambition for him to attain to which surpassed all these lower ambitions as the great sun surpasses the light of some miserable rush-light; and the ambition was this, that redeemed, restored, forgiven through Jesus’ precious blood, he might be a fellow-worker with God, that he could have the great companionship of Jesus Christ, that

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he could be an instrument in the Lord's hand, that, however long he lived upon this earth, he might always have by his side this Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him.

Now, I speak to men who may have many ambitions in their minds to-day. Some may be here whose one ambition is to die rich men. They are piling up hundreds after hundreds, and thousands after thousands, and their one ambition in life is to be rich. Now, I put it to them, and to all the other lower ambitions which there may be, whether this ambition which was offered to S. Paul is not a nobler ambition than the one that is offered to you? I know that business men sometimes think that this is all very well for clergymen and all very well for missionaries, but they are not offered the same tremendous offer that was made to a man like S. Paul. I say the gospel is vain if it is not so. There is an incident in the gospel history that exactly explains the offer which is made to you this morning. Jesus Christ wished to preach among the crowd. He was not contented with having pulpits at places where the people were not; and He asked S. Peter whether he would let Him come and stand in his ship and preach to the people from his ship. He wants now not only clergymen and ministers who should stand in the pulpits and preach to the people; He wants a pulpit in the midst of the city; He wants a pulpit in the very midst of where the people are; and He looks at your business house this morning, He contemplates your warehouses, and He says, 'May I preach to the people out of your ship?' Everything has to be considered in it. It may need some self-sacrifice, it may need some giving up of leisure time, it may need entire consecration of the whole business; but you have such an ambition before you, offered you by Jesus Christ, of being a fellow-worker in His cause, that makes all low ambitions die away. If you accept it with your whole soul you will say with S. Paul, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross.'

Once again, and lastly, this may sound to some pure individualism. Some will say, this is the very spiritual selfishness that we denounce. Was there anything else S. Paul saw in the Cross which made him something better than an individualist? Read his Epistles again. He saw something in the Cross which altered that. As he looked at it he saw something break down at every point. He says, 'He hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. They are all one in Christ Jesus.' He never thought of himself as saved individually. He was always one of a community, he was always a member of a church, he was one of a brotherhood who by love serve one another.

And so with us to-day: we put individualism against socialism. To S. Paul there was no contradiction at all. Thou wast only born for

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society, and society only existed to perfect the individual. He would have told us, if he was preaching here this morning, he would have told us that that picture of our Lord with the towel and basin going round washing the feet of the disciples solved the difficulty if we would only accept it. You used to have a magnificent ambition, but now you have it as a member of a brotherhood in Christ. So let us take this thought back with us into our work and into our business, What are we glorying in? What is the singing in our heart about? What is it that makes our eye sparkle and our cheek glow when we think about it? Is it some personal ambition for ourselves, or is it the Cross of Jesus Christ?

‘When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Let that be our motto.

A. F. WINNINGTON INGRAM.

Crucified to the World.

The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. GALATIANS VI. 14.

THE day is long past when it was easy to distinguish between the Church and the world. There was comparatively little difficulty when this Epistle was written. There lay the heathen world as described by its own historians, as painted by its own poets, as outlined in those graphic pages by S. Paul himself. There lay the heathen world with its bad traditions and its vile customs. And here, on the other side, was the young Christian society fresh from the hand of God, avowedly imperfect, avowedly made up of weak and erring men, but with new traditions, new hopes, new aspirations, and new powers. And between the two stood the Cross. You passed from the one to the other. When you became a Christian you passed from impurity to purity, you passed from Godlessness to Godliness, you passed from vile songs and bloody shows to spiritual songs and hymns in the society of Christ. The world was crucified unto you, and you unto the world.

But now things have changed, and let us boldly and thankfully admit that they have changed mainly for the better. The great tug-of-war between the Church and the world has resulted largely, with all the defects of the Church, in pulling the world past the Cross on to the Church's side. Your children have a very different world to face than the children of Rome eighteen centuries ago. They

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have all the purity of a Christian home. They are taught to look upon their mother, your wife, as a queen-consort and not as a chattel and a slave. They have public opinion, at any rate, against open immorality. They have been educated for eighteen centuries with the Christian Church, and for the last twenty-four years by a more or less Christianised state. And we thankfully record such a change. But it has this danger, that in pulling the world past the Cross, it may also have pulled past the Cross the spirit of the world.

And if it is so, nothing can compensate for such a calamity. Better the small and persecuted Church which keeps its ideal, than a large and popular Church which has lost it. Better a small body of Christians who are loyal to the commandments of Christ, than a large body which has watered them down. Better a little salt which keeps its stinging purity than tons of salt that has lost its savour.

And there seem to be three points on which there is grave danger to the ordinary Englishman, and especially the ordinary Londoner, when he is, perhaps, imagining that he is breathing the pure air of heaven, but is really breathing the tainted atmosphere of the world.

The first is this, the position which we give in our daily life to God. We all—I speak of such an assemblage as this—we all believe in God. We either look on a man who does not with pity or with distrust. We either—and this surely is the true thing to say—we take our hats off before him as one who has suffered an immense loss, or as in East London, even East London to-day, where a man who is a tradesman and an atheist dislikes it to be known, because, he says, it will hurt his business. There the mistrust comes. We believe in a God, but where do we put Him in our scheme of life? We put Him, so often, do we not, where the ancients put the sun in their scheme of nature? They believed in the sun, but they thought it a useful lamp placed in the heavens for the convenience of the earth. They assigned to it a useful but subordinate part in going round the earth. But at last there came the time when men woke up from this self-complacent dream. The sun go round the earth!—why, the earth, at nineteen miles a second, was going round the sun! The sun discharge a useful function to the earth!—why, but for the sun's strong arm the earth would pass into an abyss of darkness for ever—no light, no colour, no life, no heat! The little, dependent earth lived and moved and had its being in the sun. And is it not sometimes like that with us and God? We think it true that there is a God, but we think it infinitely inconvenient to have too much of a God. It is almost an article of the creed of respectability not to be an atheist, but it is a mark of fanaticism to make God govern every detail of our lives. When shall we wake up from this complacent dream? Either God is everything or He is nothing. He is over everything or He is

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nothing. At this moment every thought we think we think with His leave, every breath we draw we draw by His power. If He took His strong arm for a moment from our bodies, that moment our body crumbles into dust. If He took His spirit away from our souls for a second, that second our soul drops into the abyss. God is either everything or nothing. Our highest privilege is to worship Him. Our short span of life is given us to serve Him. And in the most literal sense in which the words can be used, we live and move and have our being in Him. There stand the two ideas, and the Cross stands between them. Ask the Cross which is right. Is it conceivable that the Son of God should have died upon the Cross merely for the truth that God was a useful adjunct to respectability? Can the passionate love which the Cross displays to us be satisfied by a few hurried prayers, and church once on a Sunday? No, we take our choice between them. The world will be against us here as it always was. It is against whole-hearted religion. It is against religion and it is against religious people, because it finds them inconvenient people, who bring God into every detail of their lives. We take our choice on one side of the Cross or on the other, for the world has to be crucified to us still, and we unto the world.

But, secondly, it is when we pass from religion to morality that this distinction is most clearly seen. Religion is tested by the morality it enforces, just as morality turns for its sanction to religion. And we all know what an ungrateful task it is to speak as an outsider to a body of men who think that you know nothing about the subject on which you speak—absolute morality in business, straightforwardness in bargains. One would have thought—would one not?—that after eighteen centuries of Christianity that would be an accepted principle in the capital of a Christian land. And is it not a commonplace, is it not notorious, that it is not so? Do not we clergy have our boys who are communicants leave off their communion time after time because they cannot keep the Christian law where they work? Do not men come out in mission after mission and say they cannot be Christians where they are employed? If you wish for a detailed proof, which I have no time to give this morning, turn to an article on Commercial Morality in the *Economic Review* for July 1893. You will see there the answers which business men themselves have given as to whether it was easy to obey the Christian law in business. One says he could not bring himself to do such things, but his clerk does them. Another says that the commission given to secure bargains, the treats to clerks conducting negotiations, the underselling by a man who does not really mean business to cut out a good business—one after another they cite these things, showing that business is honeycombed with dishonesty.

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I know to whom I speak this morning—men, some of them, who would cut their right hands off rather than be dishonest, men who at great cost and sacrifice are, some of them, trying to be loyal to the Christian standard. I put this to you, and I speak to you with all the reverence one would speak to men who are leading a forlorn hope—on you the hope of Christendom rests to-day. I see the Cross shining on your foreheads. You who are pledged to the Cross, you must—must you not?—bear the Cross. If you do not take the risk, how can the thing be altered at all? The very working-men whom you employ have begun that campaign. One man whom I know in East London gave up a lucrative post the other day rather than design what he thought a dishonest advertisement. You will follow and you will not mind the loss. It is better to be honest than to be rich, and a good conscience is above rubies. The world shall be crucified unto you and you unto the world.

Once again, there is one more sphere in which the Church and the world are at war as much as they ever were, and that is with regard to what is called the social evil. Acquiescence with sixty thousand or any other number of thousands of lost sisters in our midst, glossing over the fault of a man, especially if he is rich, lax views about divorce—they would make S. Paul, if he were alive on this earth to-day, write an Epistle to Londoners, or preach a sermon in our midst that we should remember to our dying day. Acquiescence in our lost sisters when God the Father is loving every one of them, and God the Son died for every one of them, and God the Holy Spirit is trying to sanctify every one of them? Never, while the Cross reigns supreme! The man not to be blamed, the man to be received into society! At the foot of the Cross he is ten times the culprit. The Cross speaks of the strong sheltering the weak, the Cross speaks of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. At the foot of the Cross, forsooth, the man is to be excused because, I suppose, he is the stronger? Never, while the Cross reigns supreme. Divorce!—there is no law for the Christian Church except the standard of its Founder. ‘Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery.’ We are a city set on a hill. Our Lord said we should be. We have a constitution, we have laws, and we have actions of our own. Like this mighty pile crowned with the Cross in the centre of London we stand as a city indeed set on a hill. We have a mission to that city, but we shall never carry out our mission if we hide the Cross or if we lower our standard. Fight on under the old banner, go forward under the old sign, and then, and then only, shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

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fore, you who suffer, go back, you who know not there is already some deadly disease beginning in your body, go back and remember that it is Jesus Christ who comes, pallid and lowly, and says, 'Drink with Me.' Wilt thou refuse? No, not for Paradise. Go back, you who know that there is a sufferer in your home, and remember that your blessed privilege is this, to wipe away the sweat and wipe the lips of Christ Himself. Go back, you who are in full life and health, you who do not know now what pain or sorrow or suffering is. You, above all, are the answer to the world's suffering, you are the answer to the cry of humanity. Go and comfort them, go and bear the others' burdens; and remember this, that if any man only gives a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

A. F. WINNINGTON INGRAM.

Irreversible Chastisements.

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me. PROVERBS i. 24-28.

I. **T**HE words of the text are awful, but not hopeless; they pronounce God's judgment on the finally impenitent; the penitent they but awaken, that they may 'hear the Voice of the Son of God and live.' The comfort to the penitent is that they do denounce God's final judgment; they are hopeless, but not to him; they are full of despair, but in death, not in life. For, until the end comes, God but warns, that He may not strike; slays, that He may make alive; wounds, that He may heal; threatens the impenitent, that He may pardon the penitent.

The sentence pronounced, then, is final. The passage speaks not only of distress, and anguish, and fear, and calamity coming upon the sinner, as they do, in this life, on those on whom God has mercy, but of destruction also. It is, then, no common anguish of mind, but that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which shall come 'upon every soul of man that doeth evil'; no mere fear of wrath to come, but that very wrath itself, when it is come; the only thing which is to be feared, the wrath of Almighty God. And the teaching of the whole is this: God is indeed long-suffering; He warns, calls, recalls, manifoldly, in various places, publicly, aloud, so that they must hear; 'in the streets,' 'in the chief place of concourse'; but if, hearing, they will not hearken, a time

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will come when not only He will not hear those who would not hear Him, but all these calls will but increase their anguish and misery.

Such is the fullest and most terrible meaning of the words; and in this they relate to that time when God will no longer pity nor spare, but the ungodly, who would not turn at His rebuke, shall perish at it. For wisdom here is He, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God, the ever-blessed Son; He, now our intercessor, then our judge; He who now pleads with us and for us, but then shall say those awful words, 'Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me.'

But because, in their fullest sense, these words relate to the day of days, the Day of Judgment, is there no sense in which they are fulfilled in this life, or are the fears which they awaken in the sinner's heart, misplaced fears? By no means. Fear they should awaken; only, not despair. They have fulfilments here, and these, tokens of the divine displeasure, although not hopeless, nor to the uttermost.

II. Of God's judgments, many are for this life without remedy. God warns that He may not strike; but when He does strike, a man's whole life is changed. 'They cry, but He does not answer.' Adam was warned; when he had tasted the forbidden fruit, it was too late; Paradise was lost; in the sweat of his brow must he eat bread; to dust must he return. When righteous Lot returned to Sodom, he was rescued from it, but with the loss of all. When Esau profanely sold his birthright, he lost the blessing also, and 'found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.' For one hasty word, Moses lost Canaan; he who had been admitted to be intercessor for the Lord's heritage was not heard for himself. Eli heard the sentence passed upon his two evil sons and his whole house, and passed the closing years of his life in mute expectation of the evil which should befall Israel, and his sons, and the ark of God, the tidings of which ended it. When David sinned, God struck the child, and 'he fasted and lay on the ground,' but God heard him not; and his whole later life was darkened by the parricide or fratricide and other evil deeds of his sons. The sword never departed from his house. All these, very different in character, and some in acceptableness with God, yet agree in this, the sentence passed upon them was final; their trial was changed; God had decreed, and would not reverse it. And therefore it became evil even to attempt what God had expressly withholden.

Now, something of this kind does happen very commonly to individuals, partly in what is the fixed order of God's providence, partly in extraordinary dispensations. It has been observed how, to certain courses of sin, God does annex certain punishments, and that, although for a time, and up to a certain degree of sin, they may not to any

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great extent follow, yet, beyond that bound, they do follow irresistibly, irreversibly. Manifold diseases 'of mind, body, or estate,' whereby God chastens sin, have this in common, that there is no certain time when the blow comes. This God keeps in His own hands and secret purpose, that no one may think he may with impunity sin even up to a certain point; suffering and loss follow upon all sin, only not those extremest losses. Nor again can we tell the rule by which God dispenseth them; to us they seem to fall more suddenly on some, while others go on longer without visible punishment. We only know that happy they who are chastened soonest. But although we cannot tell the measures of the divine rule, we can see the rule itself. Every step in sin must be followed by bitterness; but, as we see that those heaviest chastisements do not mostly fall at once, so mostly is there a time at which they do fall. There may be exceptions of exceeding mercy, in which God, by some sudden result of the sin, scares back the sinner at once. There may be fearful instances of abandonment, in which God leaves him, outwardly almost unhindered, to the hardness of his own heart. But mostly God deals in neither of these ways. There come lesser warnings; at first, slighter penalties of the sin. 'Wisdom crieth without.' Mentally a person feels a decaying mind, less love of holy things, less joy in the thought of God. Or after perhaps many neglected warnings, God awakens the sleeping sinner by some sharp, piercing loss, or takes away what was loved for its own sake and had become an idol in His temple, and his sun is darkened at noonday, and sets in sorrow. The very attempt to remedy many of these afflictions, aggravates them; eager attempts to regain health wasted by sin, have often entailed sickness more deadly, or outward circumstances are ruined more hopelessly. The lot henceforth marked out is to confess, with pious Eli, 'It is the Lord; let Him do as seemeth Him best.'

And whether such trials have come on any of us yet or no, their very presence should awe us. The nearness of Almighty God, in whatever way He manifests Himself, is very awful; for it is the presence of 'Him who can cast both body and soul into hell'; and these are His presence as a judge, at 'whose presence' 'the ungodly shall perish.' They are present judgments, witnesses of that which shall be; that it will be severe, unsparing, irremediable. If God so judges here, how much more at the end! if in the day of grace, how much more in the day of wrath! if on earth, how much more in hell! They exhibit to us God as we least like to think of Him, as a holy God, who endureth not sin; they reveal to sight what we believe, a future doom; they falsify Satan's smooth assurances, whereby he lulls the sinner to rest; and whereas he says, 'God will not punish,' they display to our eyes His sentence, 'I will not spare the guilty.'

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While yet the day of mercy lasts, and the door is not shut to, and God's very judgments are His mercies, and instead of that awful laugh, angels shall joy 'over one sinner that repenteth,' turn we from our smooth, easy ways, into the narrow, stricter way of self-renunciation and holy obedience. By God's mercy there is no 'too late' with Him until all is closed. In one sense we must all say, with the pious penitent of old, 'O Lord, too late have I loved Thee.' For did we not begin to love God too late, if we ever loved any thing instead of Him, who ever loved us? Yet there is no 'too late' for us to love God, while God still calls us to love Him. If we still hear the call, within or without, by His word or His preachers, or by the disquiet of our own conscience, it is not too late for us. Have we not heard to-day how Jesus went 'to be guest with a man that is a sinner'? Jesus still stands without and knocks. Open we our hearts to Him now, that He, in that great and terrible day, upon which eternity hangs, may hear us when we cry, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us.'

While we mourn our neglect of past calls, our sorrow, which is still His gift and call within us, will draw down His gladdening look, which will anew call us unto Him. Use we now the retirement and humiliation and deadening of ourselves in this holy season to nail ourselves closer to His sacred Cross. There where we would lay down our sins, seek we to remain ourselves, coveting no more the pleasures or distinctions or vanities of the world, but longing only so to pass through it, that when it passeth away, we may be found abiding by His side. Pass we by no call which, however indistinctly, we may hear, and He will cheer us with clearer and gladlier calls. Our very sorrow and fear will be our joy and hope; our very stumblings our strength, and dimness our light, while stumbling on in darkness we feel after Him who is our stay, our light, our joy.

E. B. PUSEY.

Gethsemane.

Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye hear, and watch with Me. S. MATTHEW xxvi. 38.

I. **T**HE narrative of the Evangelists, partly by what it describes, partly by what it suggests, is of a kind to direct our thoughts to the sufferings of our Lord's human body. To assert the contrary is to close our eyes to the temper and drift as well as to the letter of the sacred record. The sacred narrative marks clearly enough the importance and solemnity of what took place in Gethsemane. The circumstances that led up to it are themselves noteworthy. The

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gathering in the upper chamber, the Paschal feast, the institution of the sacrament of divine love, the last discourse, the solemn intercession—these were over. Jesus and His disciples, their numbers reduced by the departure of the traitor, left that upper chamber, made their way first northward, then eastward, through the streets of the city, then passed out of the eastern gate into the valley of the Kedron. Down they went, into the deep ravine, Peter the while protesting his constancy even unto death. Down they went, into the gloom of the night, until they reached the brook, and crossed it, into the garden of the olive press (that is the meaning of Gethsemane), which lay at the bottom of the slope of the Mount of Olives. David had passed by that very field with a heavy heart when leaving his capital that he might escape from his rebellious and ungrateful child, Absalom. It was familiar ground, if the language is permissible, to our Lord Himself, who, whenever He came up to the great Jewish festival, lived with his Galilean kinsfolk on the northernmost point of the Mount of Olives, and made His way day by day to the Temple down this path, across this very bridge. Now, He was leaving the city, and instead of climbing the steep road to the left, as had been His wont, He paused on crossing the brook among the olive trees, whose dark shadows would have been thrown on the earth by the paschal moon, and then, to the wonder of His disciples, He bids them, ‘Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.’ Three only were taken with Him to a nearer witness, the three who had been with Him to witness His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration; and then, while they still were with Him, He began to be sorrowful and very heavy; He began to be amazed and sore troubled. He entered, so the language of Scripture seems to suggest, He entered into a new mental state, just as we might walk into a mist or into the water. One moment all was tranquillity and strength—the strength which had bidden His followers in the upper chamber, ‘Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in Me’; and the next prostrate fear and weakness: ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.’ Three times He knelt in prayer, ever increasing in its intensity; three times He returned to visit His sleeping disciples. The highest point of this marvellous scene is noted by S. Luke: ‘There appeared an angel unto Him, strengthening Him; and being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.’

II. Now, what is the explanation which we are to give of this passage in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ? One explanation which has been offered is that Gethsemane witnessed a last and more desperate assault of the Evil One on the Son of Man; that as His

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ministry began, so it closed with a Satanic temptation; but for this the Bible gives no clear warrant. Certainly, the Evil One, after his great defeat on the mountain of the Temptation, is said to have departed from our Lord 'for a season,'—an expression which seems to imply that he afterwards returned; but so far as the text of Scripture can guide us he returned to assail, not the workmen but the work. Nay, what took place in Gethsemane is notably unlike the scene in the Temptation. At the Temptation our Lord is throughout calm, firm, majestic; He repels each successive assault of the Tempter with a word of power: 'The Prince of this World came and found nothing in Him.' In Gethsemane He is overcome by that, whatever it was, which pressed on Him; He is weak, prostrate, unnerved, dependent as it seems on the sympathy and nearness of those whom He had taught and led. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with Me.'

The difference in His bearing in the two scenes is unmistakable. There He resists, and vanquishes with tranquillity and strength, a personal opponent; here He sinks, as if in fear and bewilderment, to the very earth, as though the prey to some inward sense of desolation and collapse. Certainly, our Lord's own words, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful,' point to some great mental trouble; and if He was suffering from a mental trouble, what, may we dare to ask, was its provoking cause? Was it not, first of all, an apprehension, distinct, vivid, overpowering, of what was presently coming? 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.' His prayer was unto Him that was able to save Him from death. True, throughout His human life the appointed end had been present, in whatever sense, to His human soul; He foretold it, we know, again and again; He foretold it, and the distinctive features which would make it so hard for flesh and blood to bear; and yet up to Gethsemane the view of what was coming was comparatively distant. In Gethsemane it had all but begun. It was the difference of which soldiers have spoken, between looking forward to active service and marching for the first time into line under fire. In the few preceding hours the toils of His enemy had closed around our Lord, and unless He had chosen to save Himself by some miraculous interference it was certain that the long-foreseen tragedy must follow; and in Gethsemane, by an act of His will, our Lord opened upon His human soul a full view and apprehension of the impending sufferings, of His Passion and His death, and the apprehension was itself an agony. Pain, it has been said, is worse in anticipation than in fact, because when pain is anticipated its distress and horror are heightened by fancy. If it is wrong—and it probably is wrong—to presume that the apprehension of fact could have been disturbed by the exaggerated influence of fancy in an

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absolutely perfect and balanced mind, endowed as our Lord was with powers of forecast and insight far beyond the wonted measure of man—if it is wrong to presume this, yet what an apprehension of His coming troubles must have pressed on our Lord's human soul! There lay out before Him like a map the history of His approaching death; not an in ult, not a stripe, not a wound, not a pang was shrouded from His contemplation. The whole scene, the succession of scenes, passes before His mental eye; and as He gazes on it, a heart-sickness, the outcome and the proof of His humanity, seizes on Him, and He shrinks back in dread from this dark and complex vision of pain. The bitterness of death, they said, before the sharp edge of the axe was felt: 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.'

III. But you will feel that this explanation is not at all a full account of the scene in Gethsemane. Our Lord's bearing is more, much more, than that of a man who is shrinking from apprehended pain. It is impossible to put out of sight in this connection that pregnant sentence of the Apostle that 'He bore our sins in His own body on the tree,' or that of the prophet, that 'He made His soul,' or life, 'an offering for sin.'

The soul of Jesus in Gethsemane was, above all things, in contact with realities; but they were the realities of the world of spirit, at the least not one whit less real than the stones and the gases of the world of matter. The soul of Jesus in Gethsemane was engaged in a fearful struggle; but it was a struggle with issues reaching not into the next few weeks or years of some puny human life here below, but into the most distant vistas of the eternal world.

H. P. LIDDON.

The Agony of Gethsemane.

And He went a little further and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' S. MATTHEW xxvi. 39.

THERE are two great scenes of conflict in our Lord's earthly life, the one at the beginning and the other at the end of His ministry. In the first He was tempted to accomplish His work as the Saviour by wrong means and for selfish ends; in the last He was tempted to forego that work altogether. In the first He was tempted to a carnal use of divine gifts, to presumption, to worldly ambition, to Satan worship; in the last He was tried by the shrinking of His human nature from the bitter anguish and horror of a death in which He was to be made the sacrifice for human sin. But it is not only

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the nature of the two trials which is different, the manner in which our Lord meets them is different, and is surely of the deepest significance. In the first, however galling the arrows of temptation, we read of no weakness, no shrinking, no hesitation. Hateful as the suggestions of evil must have been to His pure and spotless nature, there is no trace of the soreness and pain of conflict; Jesus is throughout the Conqueror, serene in His majestic power and in the certainty of victory. Each temptation is met and mastered as soon as it is presented. Filled with the spirit which descended upon His baptism, He is led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. In the strength of the spirit He encounters His adversary; armed with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, He silences and drives away the Evil One. 'The devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.' But it is not so in the closing scene. As He passes within the shadow of death a horrible dread overwhelms Him. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' is His confession, and He casts Himself down with His face upon the earth, and pleads with His Father in the bitter anguish of His spirit: 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.' And as there was this shrinking of the human nature, so there was also here what had not been before, the craving for human sympathy. In the first conflict Jesus was alone in the wilderness; in the last He takes with Him His chosen disciples, to be witnesses of His agony. If He leaves them to pray, He returns to them for relief; He clings to those poor, weak human friends as if they could lighten His burden; He tears Himself from them—such is the exact force of the word which S. Luke employs—and again wrestles with His Father in prayer; and when He finds them unable to bear the burden of His grief, and to sleep through sorrow, He pleads with them: 'Simon, sleepest thou? Could not ye watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'

I. Holy Scripture casts light upon our Lord's sufferings; it tells us of meaning in them, tells us that these sufferings were necessary for Him in order to the perfection of His human nature, and necessary also for us that we might have the perfection of His sympathy in our trials. They were necessary for Him in order to the perfection of His human nature. Though He were the Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered, and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obeyed Him. There is, then, a difference between sinlessness and perfection. Adam in Paradise was sinless, but Adam in Paradise was not perfect. He was sinless because he was created in the image of God; but he was not perfect because he had never been put to the test. Perfection implies growth and development, and in the moral and spiritual

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being this implies choice deliberately exercised, and choice deliberately exercised implies temptation and trial. Without this, in the absence of struggle and conflict, in the absence of pain and resistance to evil, and the perseverance of that which is right, there can be no victory—the fibres of the moral being have not been tested. Hence, as there was in our blessed Lord that growth in wisdom which was the evidence that His divine nature did not supersede or dispense with the loss of human nature, so, likewise, He encountered temptation and trial in order to be made like us in all things, and in our nature overcome temptation, and thus, through temptation, be made perfect.

II. And we shall, perhaps, see how far it was that this particular trial, this last agony, perfected our Lord's obedience, if we try to bring distinctly before our minds in what way it was that our Lord's obedience was now tested. Compare it, for a moment, as I have already said, with the first temptation. No doubt, then, the suggestions of the Evil One were infinitely hateful to our Lord's pure human soul; but, still, those temptations were all to gratify human nature, and in gratifying human nature contravened the law of God. But mark the peculiarity of this last trial. It was addressed to that which was purest and holiest in our Lord. The terribleness of it was this: that He, in His holy, spotless soul was brought into direct and immediate contact with the whole power of evil, as a thing with which He was to identify Himself, and to make it His own. He would apparently be separating Himself from evil if He refused. Do not you see that the recoil here from submission was in itself a right recoil? If it be true that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men, and if the mind of our Lord was in perfect accord, as we know it was, with the mind of the Father, then how intense must have been His abhorrence of the sin, how fearful to make it His own! In the wilderness He was tempted to assert Himself, to prove, as it were, to Himself and to the world that He was the Son of God and the Messiah of His people; but in the garden the temptation was much more subtle. It is the recoil from evil; it is, because sin is hateful, to have nothing to do with sin; it is to shrink from the condemnation and the contamination; it is to put forth supernatural power, it is to manifest everlasting holiness; it is to forsake sinners rather than to take the burden of their sins. What could be more awful than for the infinite holiness of God to make all evil His own, that so the evil might be put away? And here was the greatness of the love, here the perfection of the obedience, that, in order to accomplish man's salvation, Christ did not shrink even from this extremest test, this last suffering, this bitterest agony, that, being made sin for us, He might save us from sin.

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III. But, once more, our Lord's trial was necessary for the perfection of His human sympathy, that He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest; necessary that, having been tempted, He might be able to succour them that are tempted. And we feel, do we not, that divine succour is not enough? The poor, crushed, bleeding human heart craves the sympathy of a heart like its own. It cannot rest on the arm of Omnipotence if it does not know that that Omnipotence can 'be touched with the feeling of its infirmities.' And there is nothing more precious in the record of our Lord's Agony in the Garden than the assurance which it gives us of His perfect sympathy with us in our loneliness and in our sorrow. Every human heart has its seasons of loneliness. There is not only the awful loneliness of the last hour; there is the loneliness of life.

And if this be true of all, it is pre-eminently true of the noblest, the loftiest, the most sensitive spirits. We all of us know something of this loneliness. Well, this was a Saviour's burden too. He was always infinitely above even His chosen disciples. They could not understand Him; His aspirations, His sorrows, His joys were such as they could not share. And yet, how full of tender sympathy He was! He who was so lonely Himself can feel for our loneliness with His mighty heart. On His perfect knowledge, on His never-failing sympathy we may rest at all times. His love never fails, is never wearied. And as with loneliness, so with sorrow. There are sorrows which it seems almost impossible to bear; there are sorrows which make a man wish, like Job, to die; there are sorrows which cast us on our face with the exceeding bitter cry, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!' Then, what consolation in the thought that He has passed through the same experience, that He, the perfect Man, knew not how to bear His burden, would have escaped from it if He could without disobedience to His Father's will! Knowing this, remembering this, shall we not learn the lesson of His resignation?

BISHOP PEROWNE.

The Agony in the Garden.

And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. S. MATTHEW xxvi. 39.

I. **R**EGARDING the Agony as a part of the means, which were 'to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings,' we shall best understand the passage before us, if we remember the general purpose for which our Saviour 'poured out His

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soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.' Now, that purpose plainly was, not to confirm His doctrine, not as a mere witness for the truth, not to show how a good man could die, but to be a vicarious sacrifice, 'to bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows,' to suffer the punishment due to our sins, 'to make reconciliation for iniquity,' to redeem our souls from death by His most precious blood, to bruise the serpent's head, and to free us from the hereditary bondage, in which the evil spirit has bound us. These were the objects for which He suffered, and of course each portion of His final sufferings is to be understood in reference to this, His great design. The Agony in the Garden, then, was a part of the final struggle with the tempter. It was the last hope of that wicked spirit, and it failed; it failed by the efficacy of prayer.

II. What was that cup, and what were its ingredients, the horrors of which were sufficient to trouble the spirit of the Saviour of the world?

It could not be death only, although that death was a most cruel and ignominious one; it could not be mere bodily pain, although the tormentors around Him took a devilish pleasure in increasing His tortures. He who knew the worthlessness of the present life, could not look forward to death as an evil; He who had left the bosom of His Father, must have rejoiced at the prospect of returning to Him. He who knew, what we believe, that 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,' must have despised the mere bodily tortures which were prepared for Him. It is not meant that, when actually tormented, He did not feel the full bitterness of the pains which led to His dissolution,—God forbid that we should undervalue or depreciate the anguish of that hour. But we are speaking now not of His sufferings upon the Cross, but of His previous sufferings in the garden; and it is not probable that the mere anticipation of bodily pain would have pressed so heavily upon Him, as to produce a sweat of blood, and to occasion even a passing wish for preservation from the mere agonies of death,—no, we have the warrant of Scripture, for believing that there was something more, a mental and moral agony superadded to the dread of the corporeal trial. He stood there as the scapegoat of His people, 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.' 'Upon His head were put all the iniquities of the spiritual children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins.' 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' Now, though we are not authorised by Scripture in saying that the sins of all mankind were literally transferred to that conscience, which was without spot, yet we may well believe that to Him who 'knew what was in man,' whose omniscience extends through all ages, the sins of

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the whole world were in a manner mentally present; that He duly estimated their multitude and their enormity, and that He was overpowered by a sense of the ruin entailed upon that being who had once been created 'after God's own image.' Yes; the sins of all generations, past, present, and to come, may be supposed to have been in this sense part of the ingredients of that cup of bitterness. The sins of the whole world, the sins of our fathers and of ourselves, the sins which we may have committed yesterday, and the sins which we may be about to commit to-day, contributed something to the necessity for His death, and something therefore to His 'innumerable troubles,' which a knowledge of that necessity occasioned; and when to this we add, that for these countless sins He was appointed as the only sacrifice, and that upon the struggle which was now commenced the salvation of mankind was to depend, we shall see abundant reason for the exceeding sorrow at Gethsemane, and for that sense of desolation which made Him exclaim upon the Cross, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?'

The sinner will here find the sum and substance of that Christian religion which was revealed for his use. He will see the consequences of his transgressions, and God's hatred of sin, he will learn how much it has cost to redeem his soul; and his hope and endeavours will be, that those sufferings, which are all-sufficient in themselves, may not, in his case, be rendered ineffectual by his obstinacy. The mourner also will here see how he ought to mourn, how the natural flow of sorrow must be tempered by fervent prayer, and what absolute resignation must be mingled with the supplication for deliverance from evil. And whether we are in sin, in temptation, or in sorrow, if we will fall upon our knees, and apply these meditations to our practical use, there will not be wanting to us the spiritual assistance of the Holy Ghost, as there appeared to our blessed Saviour in His distress an angel strengthening Him.

R. W. JELF.

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The Agony of Denial.

'Then they took Him, and led Him, and brought Him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. S. LUKE xxii. 54-62.

I. **H**AD our Lord loved less, His agony would have been immeasurably reduced. To S. Peter the privilege of peculiar intimacy had been extended. He was one of the three favoured apostles who had witnessed the raising of Jairus's daughter. He was on the Mount of Transfiguration, and that scene made an indelible impression upon his mind. He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and knew something of that terrible incident. Such special intimacy, so lovingly extended to S. Peter, would no doubt deepen the agony of his denial. Even in our shallow lives, the opening up of our hearts, of our sorrows or of our joys, to one in whom we trust is made on the assumption of enduring love, of unalloyed affection, of cementing sympathy. We love to allow a friend to understand us, through and through, because we rely upon his enduring affection. Nor are there, in this scene of sorrow and of vicissitude, many influences more tender or more mighty in their tenderness than those which are generated by mutual interchange of the confidences of affliction, of apprehension, of grief, or of effort. To know a soul in adversity is to love that soul in futurity.

This helps us to recognise the grief which S. Peter brought here and now to our Lord. Beside all which, those who were gathered in that open court, in the chilly hours of the night, knew, by various and converging facts, that he was no ordinary adherent. They would couple the act of betrayal with his triple denial. Both would encourage and even inflame the rude and the coarse to heap indignity the most despicable, and insult the most insolent and arrogant and outrageous, upon the desolate Prisoner, who was sold by one follower and scouted by another. Soldier and slave, Levite and priest, would make contumely their amusement, ridicule their mirth, and cruelty

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their base enjoyment. Each could cite the Apostle who denied Him to justify his heartless iniquity. Each could hush the whisperings of conscience, about the possible innocence of the manacled Jesus, by the base bargaining of one, and the loud-oathed scorn of another. And thus, in the violation of love's confidence and in the infliction of the multiplied wrong which was produced thereby, we see something of the Saviour's agony through the saint's denial.

II. Nor may we doubt that another element in His anguish was His typical and translucent spirituality, confronted as it was with the grovelling materialism by which it was surrounded and assaulted. In proportion as we have His spirit, His sight is ours, His estimate is ours. This spirituality of perception, being of the essence of divine life, follows the laws by which life is governed. Amongst these must be reckoned the grief which spirituality endures when the objects of its love are enslaved by the material, are blind to the splendour of moral beauty, and are seen to cower before the false and the base, and even the brutal. This our Lord beheld in His Apostle. He saw His professed friend stumble and stagger in the presence of mendacity, of meanness, of envy.

And in this knowledge, which spiritual souls have of the meanness of materialism, we see another factor in the agony of our Lord, through the Apostle's denial. In the shame which he felt at being considered an adherent of Christ, there is the clearest evidence of his unspirituality. This, to incarnate love, and to trusting friendship, would bring grief, and woe, and anguish.

III. And once again. The anguish of our Lord was due to S. Peter's dread of consequences. If ever the fear of man brought a snare in which the soul of an Apostle was caught, if ever a follower of our Lord tripped in the tangled skein which is always woven when one false step is taken, it was here. He saw that the priests had in their hands now the one Personage in the country who had given them reason to fear His words, His works, His life. They held Him in the tenacious and unyielding grip of enraged, unpitying, and revengeful ecclesiasticism. He had been betrayed to them by one disciple. Nine had not only forsaken their Master, but to do so they had given wings to their feet. S. John was alone, in the high priest's house, with the Lord. With that solitary exception, Christ was hopelessly desolate, and as hopelessly deserted. S. Peter knew, by the powerful instinct which somehow comes to men when the worst is reached, that escape was impossible to the Christ. This would impress him the more because every statement which He had made respecting the closing scenes in Jerusalem was being fulfilled. All had been offended because of Him. One had betrayed Him. He had denied Him, and even the very bird whose crowing was to

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mark his abysmal apostasy illustrated the stern reality of both prediction and performance.

Beware of the least denial of the principles, the doctrines, the claims of Christ. Distrust the strength of your own heart. Learn, however slowly, gradually, and even reluctantly, not to have any 'confidence in the flesh.' And if you have been so unhappy as to deny the Lord Jesus, then let the penitence of S. Peter have its due and ready place in your saddened soul. The look of love, which, like the gentlest air of heaven, fell upon the heart-strings of his memory, will light on yours. Tears, hot tears will flow. They will be wiped away by the pierced Hand. In the clearer glancings of eyes joyous with forgiveness you will behold your Saviour, mighty in His resurrection power, and nearer than ever in His restoring pity.

DEAN LEFROY.

On Your Guard.

And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. S. LUKE xxii. 40.

FROM the point whence we catch our first distant view of the Cross of Christ on Calvary, we cannot help dwelling on the character of His fearful temptations. These were by no means limited to the sufferings which closed that cruel day of the Crucifixion. On the contrary, the temptations of Christ, as we understand the term, must have gradually risen to their most appalling height during the hours which immediately preceded the final tragedy. It is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive the exact character of the temptations which surrounded the life of Christ; because, whatever they were, they were experienced by one who, whilst He was man in His human nature like ourselves, was yet in His divine nature God, and therefore essentially different from mortal men. Still, though He might, and doubtless did, receive great support in consequence of the union between His divine and human natures, yet His temptations were none the less real. They closely resembled our own trials. In our trials we are promised divine aid, and divine support; but, great as the power and efficacy of that support undoubtedly is, our temptations are nevertheless real and severe.

I. It is impossible, I conceive, for any bond of sympathy to bind two people firmly together, unless both have shared some kindred joy, or borne common sorrow. Our Lord was well aware how necessary was such a link, and this common chain of sympathy He found in the fact that His disciples had been associated with Him in His trials;

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'Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.' And it seems to show the depth of His interest and fellow-feeling, that He at the same time sums up the result of His own experience, and reveals the secret of His own success in those tender yet warning words, 'Pray, lest ye enter into temptation.'

I need not say that for us the whole value of the sympathy shown by Christ for His followers, on this night of His agony, is derived from the fact that He was not only their human friend, tenderly bound to His followers by terms of common friendship, but that He was their divine Master—one who had power to protect as well as infinite wisdom to advise—one whose sympathy, therefore, was not merely emotional, but of a practical service which is infinitely precious. He had Himself found the flesh to be weak, but He had sought the great remedy for weakness; and then the spirit's willingness, which had never wavered, won its complete and final triumph. When next He prayed, it was no longer, 'Let this cup pass from Me'; but the resignation was absolute, 'O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done!'

II. And now look at the disciples' conduct. They did not pray, but they slept; and though their spirit had been willing to suffer with their Master, yet, at the very first sign of immediate danger, they all forsook Him, and fled. They were no sooner tempted than they fell. They clearly wanted that divine support in their trial which had proved so all-sufficient for their Master in His far greater trial.

The common mistake men commit is that they enter unprepared into temptation, and then expect to be upheld. First, they subject themselves with their eyes open to a trial which they well know will test their constancy to the uttermost, and then they look for some almost miraculous interference to withdraw them unharmed. When we see how fearfully men and women expose themselves and others to temptation, we do not wonder that so few are saved; rather, we are surprised that any remain who are not utterly lost.

Surely a man who is deeply in earnest, a man who really values religious life, a man who firmly believes and hopes in a happy eternity, will not rashly encounter enemies without arms of self-defence; he will not challenge temptation, and then for the first time pray to God for the help of His Spirit. Rather he will pray before the trial comes, that when it arises he may find strength to withstand.

G. PROTHERO.

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Christ's Agony in the Garden.

And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

S. LUKE xxii. 44.

I. LET us notice our Lord's prayer.

1. His prayer was solitary.

'He withdrew from His disciples.' He withdrew 'about a stone's cast'—about fifty or sixty paces—'and kneeled down and prayed.' In the midst of His own sorrows, He was full of sympathy. He therefore warned His disciples of their coming danger, and urged them to pray by themselves. 'Pray ye that ye enter not into temptation.' They had their errands at a throne of grace, and He had His. Sometimes when they had joint errands, they prayed together. It was fit now that He and they should pray separately. How was this solitary place first consecrated by our Lord's devotion, and afterwards desecrated by Judas's treason! Our Lord now, we may suppose, reluctantly left His disciples, and with heavy steps and visible emotion sought to be alone. There are seasons when the best company cannot be borne.

Now, this secret prayer is the duty of all Christians. 'Thou when thou prayest,' said our Lord, 'shut to thy door, and pray to thy Father which seeth in secret.' No one of us needs to urge that we have no suitable place for secret prayer. Where there is the will, there is the way. Our Lord's secret place for communion with God was a garden. It was in the open air; it was in a part of the Mount of Olives—separate from the eyes of men. Peter prayed in secret, upon the flat roof of the house at Joppa. Nehemiah prayed in secret, while standing behind King Ahasuerus, with the royal cup in his hand. Whenever we pray, we can pray secretly, although in a crowd at the time; and we can so hold converse with our Maker and our God.

2. Again, our Lord's prayer was not only solitary, but also devout.

He prayed 'kneeling.' God made the body as well as the soul. In prayer, as sinners, we should humble not only the soul, but also the body.

3. Our Lord's prayer was not only solitary and devout: it was likewise submissive.

His prayer was, 'Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done.' His three disciples, Peter and James and John, we may suppose, had been taken by Him apart from the rest into a retired gorge; and He was

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sufficiently near, in the moonlight, to be heard and seen by them. They therefore saw His posture, and heard His prayer.

What a model of submission is the Lord Jesus to us! In all the trials and difficulties to which we are subject, we do quite right to come in prayer to our heavenly Father; but, in all our prayers, we must ever bear in mind that following our own will in preference to God's will is sin; and, therefore, in our prayers we should always add, 'Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done. I am the clay. Thou art the Potter. Thy ways are in the deep waters, and Thy footsteps are not known. But Thou doest all things well. All Thy judgments are true and righteous. The will of the Lord be done.'

This is acceptable prayer. And prayer—solitary prayer, devout prayer, and submissive prayer—is sure to be graciously regarded. This we shall now see from the second part of our subject. You have seen our Lord's prayer. Now observe—

II. His relief.

We read that as soon as He had prayed, 'there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.' The appearing of this heavenly messenger proves the efficacy of prayer. Hagar prayed for water; and the angel came. Daniel prayed; and God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. Cornelius prayed; and an angel directed him to S. Peter. So Jesus prayed; and an angel appeared. In the wilderness angels ministered unto Him after His victory. Here the messenger of heaven comes in the midst of His conflict. What an affecting proof this was of the willing self-humiliation of the Lord Jesus in our behalf! He who made the angels, here condescends to receive the help of angels! Through God the Father beholding His Son as a sinner for us, the divine power had departed as it were from Jesus; and His human nature required succour. He was, therefore, for a season made lower than the angels; and He was capable of receiving their help. And how was He helped? He was helped as His servant Paul was afterwards helped. The trial was not removed; but He was strengthened to support it.

If God proportions the burden to the shoulders, we shall have no reason to complain. This is what God did for Jesus, and what He will do for us also, if we are His children. David confessed this to be a sufficient answer to his prayer in the day of trouble, that God strengthened him 'with strength in his soul.' The Lord Jesus could have had legions of angels to rescue Him, if He had pleased. Nay, this single angel could have chased away all His foes, and delivered Him. One angel, in a single night, slew 185,000 soldiers in Sennacherib's army. But no: this was the hour of His enemies, and of the powers of darkness. The angel merely came to support Him by

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his presence. And, while Christ's friends were asleep, and His enemies awake, the bare presence of an angel would be a solace to Christ's spirit.

But our Lord's sufferings were not yet over. In fact, they were only commencing. We now go on, therefore, to our third subject.

III. His agony.

For its mysterious solemnity, the Agony in the Garden stands next to the Agony on Calvary. It is one of the deep things of God. Christ was now treading the winepress alone. All the powers of darkness were contending with Him. What this was is afterwards explained: 'And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' The word agony is a very strong word. It means the energy of exertion put forth by any one while wrestling. Christ's mind and body were on the full stretch, as a man wrestling with an antagonist. So great was His terror and amazement, that although He had received some strength from the angel, He prayed yet more and more earnestly. As the Apostle says, 'He made supplication with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death.' Not that there was any coldness or indifference in the prayers He offered before; but there was now a greater vehemency, which was expressed both by voice and by gesture.

In view of this terrible scene, let no one mock at sin, or think lightly of death. Did sweat come in with the sin of Adam as part of the curse? Christ was made a curse for us, and therefore He underwent as the second Adam a bloody sweat, that in the sweat of His face we sinners might eat bread, the bread of life, and live—live for ever. An ancient author mentions that in India once a serpent's bite caused a sweat of blood; and here were the similar effects of the bite of Satan, the old serpent, and that bite was infinite pain, which pain none but lost souls in hell can explain or understand. So copious were these drops of blood, that they fell not only on his raiment, but on the ground. He was now being treated as a vicarious sufferer, as though He were the greatest of sinners; and without shedding of blood—blood of sorrow and blood on the Cross—there could be no remission of our sins. How shall we sufficiently admire this love of Christ! Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should suffer, and at last die for his friends! In our case, however, Jesus died not for friends, but for enemies—for sinners—for rebels.

We now learn, in conclusion—

1. The safety of the Christian believer.
2. The peril of the unconverted sinner.

C. CLAYTON.

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The Agony in the Garden.

And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. S. LUKE xxii. 44.

THE Garden of Gethsemane is associated with one of the most woful and mysterious experiences of the Man of Sorrows. Like the scene in the wilderness, and the suffering on the Cross, it is unique, profound, and, in its final reachings, beyond the range of the most penetrating intelligence. From the earliest Christian days it has attracted reverent attention. The language of martyrs has been coloured by it. Devotion unto death has turned to it. Like the Psalter, in which the holiest joy has found expression, the records of the Agony in the Garden have risen before eyes that were tearless in sorrow, and they have trembled upon lips that were whitened with woe. Nor is it difficult to see why. It is a revelation of the afflicted Christ, and His utterances of supplication, His awful restlessness, His acquiescence in the divine will, and the ministries of the strengthening angel, have brought Him very near to the humanity which he deigned to assume, and which He died to uplift.

I. We shall not wonder that saintly souls have drawn a spiritual line around the Agony in the Garden. They would, with uplifted hand and trembling voice, plead that that scene may never be violated by the Babel voices of disputation. 'A feeling always seizes me,' says the thoughtful Krummacher, 'as if it were unbecoming to act as a spy on the Son of the living God in His last secret transactions with His heavenly Father; and that a sinful eye ventures too much in daring to look upon a scene in which the Lord appears in a state of weakness and abandonment that places Him on the same footing with the most miserable among men.' And yet, have we not here a scripture which is 'written for our learning'? May not the instruction which it is designed to impart be obscured by dark sayings? And shall we not offer the supplication which has been urged by ten thousand times ten thousand souls with greater reality and meaning, if we endeavour to appreciate the cause of 'Thine agony and bloody sweat'? Yea, it may be that our cry, 'Good Lord, deliver us,' shall be urged with firmer faith, if we see why our Saviour 'was heard, in that He feared.'

As we now reverently look upon our divine Lord, we are amazed by the severity of the strain which He here experienced. This appears in His terrible agitation. The moral grandeur of His composure, so clear in His recently uttered discourses, has given place to fearful restlessness. 'I go and pray yonder.' 'He went a little

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further, and fell on His face.' 'He cometh to His disciples.' 'He went away again the second time.' 'He came and found them asleep again.' 'He left them, and went away again.' Six separate movements within what must have been but a short space, and to and from the same persons! Ah! who that has known the bitterness of anguish and the pressure of overwhelming grief does not recognise here the agitation of affliction? The soul within is swept as by a whirlwind, and its waves rise high upon the body without. Physical restlessness indicates, all too certainly, moral distress.

There are those who see in the dejection of the Christ nothing more than physical exhaustion. The strain of three years' hardship and the assured isolation that was to follow, precipitated by base betrayal, denial, desertion, told upon the physique of the Jewish peasant. He was now frail even to syncope, and those who admit the influence of mental distress upon the strongest frame find no difficulty in accounting for the prostration of the Christ. Now, we must never forget that, while we read of our Lord being hungry, thirsty, and fatigued, there is not one word in Holy Scripture respecting 'illness' as an experience of His nature. Moreover, when we look at the gospels, the terms which are used to indicate the region of the sorrow are not the terms which would be used to indicate physical exhaustion. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' S. Mark, with characteristic exactness and vividness of detail, says He 'began to be sore amazed, and very heavy'; and while the latter may be referred to the body, and the former to the mind, S. Matthew's 'sorrowful and very heavy' helps us to regard the heaviness as the expression of the sorrow. The element of surprise is introduced by S. Mark. There was here an unexpected horror which oppressed our adorable Lord, and of that horror, of that one, unique, never before, never since experienced amazement, bodily debility gives no adequate explanation.

II. The truth appears to lie deeper than we have as yet penetrated. It is, we believe, suggested by our Lord's own words; by the language of S. Luke; and by the inspired reference to Gethsemane in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Our Lord described His soul as 'exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' by which we understand the end to which that sorrow was likely to lead, the issue towards which the agony pointed, then and there. In that dreary and dreadful hour, the hugest forces of evil were arrayed against the Saviour. The terrible agencies of the principalities and the powers of darkness, ancient, organised, experienced, malignant, put forth their deadliest hate and scorn and might. The envenomed rage of the enemy was at its height. Death and sin—never so near to the Immaculate Prince of Life as now—appeared in their hideous duality, connection, and loathsome-

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ness. These fell influences, principles, and spiritual agents were at their strongest when the Man of Sorrows was weakest. They assailed Him. They pressed Him. And the cup, so bitter; and the exceeding sorrow of soul, so terrible; and the sore amazement, so searching, was, not the fear of death, but the fear of death in the garden, and not upon the Cross. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.'

The Cross was seen by the Sufferer, through the darkness of the night, beyond the boundary of the garden, and bright with the tints of Easter light. Its issues—moral, spiritual, universal, eternal—were satisfying to the Saviour's soul, and who can doubt the influence of these convictions upon the broken-hearted, dejected Deliverer? But these issues were to be won, not in the garden, but on the Cross. There divine law and divine love met in Him who magnified the one and proclaimed the other. There sin, so hideous, so anarchical, so selfish; and self-sacrifice, so unsparing, so unsullied, so beautiful, were combined, but uncommingled. There moral antagonisms were associated as never before, and as never since. There age-long promise and type and pregnant prediction received fulfilment, correspondence, and performance. There was the high hope of the restoration of a ruined race to the heaven of the Father's heart. But what if the Cross should not be reached? What if the prostration and the concentrated enmity of the adversary should so overwhelm the Christ that other words than those of triumph should be uttered: 'I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain'? Such thoughts give us a fresh view of the intensity of the Saviour's agony. They reveal the courage of His self-devotion. They show us not alone the moral splendour of His voluntary consecration to our need. In His human dread we see at once the glow of His love and the immeasurable agony by which His expression of it was assailed. Ay, and more. We learn—and nowhere else more clearly—the efficacy of prayer. His was the prayer of the highest and of the holiest courage. It laid hold of God. It laid hold of man. He would save man by clinging to God. Thus loving without a regret or a reserve, thus obeying without an approach to irresolution, He was heard for His piety. The horrible dread passed away. The courage of divine devotion is heard in some of the most wonderful words that ever fell from His lips: 'Rise, let us be going.' The Agony in the Garden is at last alleviated by the Vision of the Cross.

DEAN LEFROY.

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Pontius Pilate.

And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. S. LUKE xxiii. 24-25.

‘AND Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.’ There is a strange pathos in the refrain of this name recurring every morning and evening, as the Church of God rehearses her belief in Jesus Christ our Lord, ‘crucified under Pontius Pilate.’ Never shall that story of the Cross of agony be publicly recited in the ears of men, and before the face of God, without this name recalling to us that one other human figure, shrinking and craven, yet dragged out of the shadows to stand alone by the side of the eternal Victim; placarded for ever before our eyes as the one human instrument, as it were, who stamped his individuality on the drama of the Passion, the one man whose personality adheres to the historic scene, the one man whose individual will plays a direct and undeniable part in decreeing that momentous act—Pontius Pilate, the judge who gave the sentence of death; ‘He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.’ And yet this signalling of the name by the Christian Church does not imply any peculiar or unique guilt on Pilate’s part. It is not sent there for our abhorrence, not with the intention of gibbeting him so that he may go down in infamy. Far from it; the gospel accounts are unanimous in their kindly and temperate treatment of Pilate. They have against him none of that unqualified condemnation which they pass, for instance, upon Judas, the traitor. On the contrary, just as in all cases of Roman government, so here, they are especially careful to exhibit its generosity, its equity, its moderation, its good intentions. The officers of Rome are nearly always thrown into the most favourable light by our Christian gospels. It is familiar to us how pleasant and almost tender is their account of the centurions. These soldiers are shown us as men of honourable justice, and of religious disposition. They are ever S. Paul’s best friends in all his rough adventures; and wherever we find ourselves in Bible scenery, Rome appears as a beneficent mistress, without tyranny, without cruelty, a refuge from the bitter hates and jealousies of the people that she held in peace and order under her control. The law that she administers is, in the main, a terror only to evil-doers. That was the witness of S. Paul; and governors, whom we gather from other sources to have been unscrupulous and harsh, are still spoken of in the Bible with courtesy

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and without abuse; so that even Felix, who, out of sheer willingness to curry favour with the Jews, left Paul bound in prison uncharged and unconvicted, has no word of denunciation. And this genial attitude of favour is, as we know, remarkably preserved towards Pilate. The gospels spend their power in testifying to Pilate's efforts to save our Lord from the rage of the Jews. They exhibit the overwhelming difficulties that beset him. They emphasise the persistence of his struggle to do right. They might almost be said to hold a brief on his behalf, so earnest are they in tendering pleas and excuses for his final failure. They deliberately assert him to be guiltless himself of the blood of that Just Man, but to have been overborne by a relentless claim, against which he proved impotent.

I. Why then is his name inserted in the Creed? Not for special detestation, but primarily as a statement of date. Pilate's governorship marked the exact historical moment of the great event. It occurred, the Creed wishes to say, just then. The records of Rome would for ever transmit the memory of the period of Pilate's official rule. The years were known at Rome by the names of the consuls. It was the traditional manner of marking the date; and the Church, in affixing Pilate's name, appeals to the normal methods by which the world-empire stored and stated its facts. The Crucifixion, it would say, was no mythical vision, no floating tale that hung about the dim skirts of imaginative poetry, no dreamy picture of some mystical allegorical hope; no, it happened as other things happened, it actually came to pass here on this earth under definite conditions, in the course of human history, on a certain day, in a known and fixed year. That is what the Church wanted to assert when she declared that Jesus Christ 'was crucified under Pontius Pilate,' and as such that inserted name in the Creed has a peculiar significance to-day for us who are asking so anxiously, so nervously: 'Did it all happen? Was it a fact? Can we credit the accounts given? How was it? When was it? Is it not all a beautiful dream, a fragment of imagery cast up out of men's poetical aspirations?' There come back to such questions as that the unfailing answer, morning and evening, to be given until time shall end: It was a fact, notified under public attestation, recorded in the normal archives of an imperial register. It happened in a particular year when a certain governor was in office. There is therefore no doubt or confusion about the fact. 'He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.' Not for obloquy then is the name there, and yet there it is, and there for ever; and ever while it stands there, it will be a name of shame; for ever, men will say as they hear it, 'Pontius Pilate,—that is the wicked and unjust judge, who, against his own conscience, "gave

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sentence that it should be as the Jews required," and crucified the Lord of Glory.'

II. And this is the pathos of his fate on which I would ask you to dwell. Here is a man who is not better nor worse than any other; not at all odiously wicked, as the gospels relate,—indeed, they tell us, as we were saying, that he had much that was unexpectedly good. He was sincerely anxious to do the right; he made long and strenuous endeavours to stem the mob's hostility; he risked a good deal to obtain what he saw was justice; and he took trouble, and he examined and he interviewed, and he went a long way in the direction of obedience to conscience; and he might have gone through his course in the world with every possible credit, and he might have gone through his official career with far better reputation than thousands of men before and after him. There was nothing to signalise him. He was no bad example of an average Roman governor. In a few months from that time he would have retired from his post to end his days in that merciful obscurity which has closed over the memories of thousands such as he. But the tragedy of his life lies in this, that suddenly, by accident, as we speak, without any wish or claim or consent of his own, unasked, unwarned, he found himself to be placed in the very heart and centre of the sharpest and fiercest crisis that the world has ever seen. The heat of the great battle surges with abrupt vehemence, with fierce emphasis, around the spot where he happens to stand. And it is the hour of all hours, and he is in the very thick of its awful pressure before he is aware of it; before he can take its measure, unsuspected, uncalculated, the dreadful war has swung its way, the war between good and evil, between God and the devil, the death struggle for the world's redemption. Around him the forces of this spiritual strife sweep and whirl; and in that moment he is caught up into it as into a whirlpool; and round him they eddy and swarm and howl and they clamour for a decision from him, a decision swift and momentous and vital—'Yes' or 'No,' no half measures allowed, no compromise, no shrinking. Every eye is upon him in the dreadful agony of that suspense. 'Will he hold, will he yield?' Every eye shall watch him, every ear shall hear the issue. The light beats down, the glare and the blaze. He stands on the one spot on which for all eternity the light is to fall. Nothing there can be secret—nothing can be covered or postponed. Breathless, as it were, the entire humanity to come waits for his judgment. What will he do? The world's spiritual crisis, as we see it, looking back to him; but what was it to him? What was it to the outward eye? Not a world-crisis at all. Nothing of the sort to the outward eye, to Pilate's eye; nothing but a passing scuffle, an obscure mob riot in an out-of-the-way corner of that immense empire.

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So it looked to the outward eye; only, it happened to be something quite different, something which he could never have foreseen or dreamed of. It happened to be the historic act of the world's age-long tragedy; it happened to be an hour which shall never be forgotten. On that hour the light is to fall, and every detail of it is to stand out fixed and sharp in that terrible and merciless glare. God is looking, and angels are gazing, and the living and the dead throughout all time will gaze and gaze with eyes rooted on that spot, while even up in heaven itself that hour will abide eternalised in the changeless worship of 'the Lamb that was slain.' And that is what it was, and therefore from that hour he, the poor judge, can never escape. For ever, the record of the act contains his name, the name of the judge who is yet himself judged, who, in the judgment that he gave, pronounced judgment on himself; the judge who is himself the prisoner, imprisoned year after year within the narrow limits of that most awful moment. Always over his head the writing will stand which was written: 'Jesus Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate.'

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Power of the Will.

And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. S. LUKE xxiii. 25.

THE scene brought before us in these words is the culminating point of the great drama, if with a profound sense of its reality and import we yet may call it so, the great drama in which the redemption of man was wrought out. In these tremendous yet passionless words, S. Luke lets us into the secret of what was going forward. We can hardly realise it as it actually took place: the wild Oriental tumult; the angry, ignorant mob, with their leaders moving about among them, hinting, urging, suggesting, putting into their mouths the words which gave an appearance of deliberate unanimity to the thoughtless impulses of the crowd; above it all the Roman governor, outwardly authoritative, dignified, self-controlled, but inwardly weak, wavering, cowardly; and before him those two figures between whom the choice was to be made—the spotless, loving Teacher and Healer of men, and 'him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison.' Of their own choice the people desired Barabbas, and of their will they demanded the death of Jesus. 'He released unto them him . . . whom they had desired; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.'

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I. Whenever we are brought face to face with responsibility, and feel that a stress which we can hardly bear is being laid upon the human will, there is a natural tendency to shrink back behind the undoubted mystery of God's all-controlling power, to excuse ourselves by an appeal to His will as the real cause of all that is done on earth. We are but puppets in the hands of an Almighty, All-knowing Power, which moves us hither and thither in fulfilment of its own decrees, and our will is but an unreal, delusive feeling of freedom under the sway of a despotic destiny. And this might be urged with special force in the case of our Lord's condemnation and crucifixion; for was this not foretold and foreordained by God? The Bible does not shrink from the difficulty, though it does not explain it. It accepts both truths, the truth of the divine foreknowledge, the truth of man's free will; it enforces both, irreconcilable though they may seem to us. And in special reference to this very event of our Lord's condemnation S. Peter brings both factors together in one statement, regardless of the apparent contradiction: 'Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye, by the hand of lawless men, did crucify and slay'—it was, he says, your doing, though you were but the instruments of God's foreordained purposes; your doing, and you cannot evade your responsibility for it. Still more clearly at another time he taxes them with their perverse choice of Barabbas for Christ. 'Ye denied the holy and righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life.' Yes, and he could say this though he also recognised how blindly they did it all—'I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.'

II. There is always presented to us the alternative, the choice between Christ and Barabbas: in every little act of estrangement from God, in every word, every thought, the choice is made and the will has its share, its responsibility that cannot be taken from it. Thomas Carlyle, speaking of his father, who had been a working mason, described the houses he had built as 'texts of the gospel of man's free will,' and so is all faithful work that men leave behind them: it exalts and dignifies the human will, it enables us to believe in it, as the gospel teaches us to believe in God. But there is work that is a gospel of perdition, not salvation—work the choice of which is the choice of Barabbas instead of Christ.

You cannot stop where you wish. The choice of evil brings with it in the end the hatred of good, and the most terrible consequence of the uncontrolled will is that the natural love of what is noble and generous gradually dies out, till, instead of the shouts of Hosanna, are heard the derisive clamours, 'Crucify Him! crucify Him!'

A. T. LYTTTELTON.

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The Religious Value of Small Duties.

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that, He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. S. JOHN xiii. 2-5.

I. **I**T was a simple deed of kindly human charity; for the Jews, you know, when they entered a house for dinner, would cleanse their feet from the dust of the roads by which they had come. People say it was a lesson in humility; and I do not doubt that the disciples needed to be more humble, or that the Lord would teach them, even on the verge of His Passion; for all His life was a parable of humility, and what has most deeply impressed the world in the record of it is that, although He was so great, He became so humble, and when He could have summoned legions of angels to His side He chose to shed His blood for human sin. But it seems to me, unless I miss the sense of the passage, that the Lord would teach His disciples a deeper lesson than this. For if at such a time, 'knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,' He was not unmindful to wash His disciples' feet, I think He would show that there is nothing which is a duty, or even a kindness, not the simplest service which any one of us can render to any, though he be the least, of all His brethren but is appropriate and may sacredly be done at the most solemn epoch of any human life; and so the lesson which I read in the story is, if I may so call it, the religiousness of common duties.

II. I suppose to most of us it occurs sometimes as a temptation to think that, if only we had a wider sphere or an ampler power, we should have a better opportunity of serving God. For we are always making the mistake of thinking that we could prove ourselves to be religious by doing some great thing, whereas it is in doing small things—not in doing heroic deeds, if I may dare to say so, but rather in doing unheroic deeds heroically—that the essence of true religion consists. We are always looking, as it were, for something out of the common, and forgetting the divinity of common things. If we were bidden to do some great thing, it were easy to us; but when God bids us wash and be clean, we refuse salvation. We are seeking Christ in the wilderness, or on the mountain, and lo! there is One who sits at our door and says, 'It is I!'

You will not find that Christ ever spoke of 'the masses'; but He

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thought of every individual soul. He built up His Church, all its nobleness, all its sanctity, from the contributions of countless fragmentary lives. He did not look for great things in all His followers, but He showed the infinite power and worth of little things, if they are done in the spirit of divine charity. He who reads the soul, and, reading it, can tell what is the motive force which prompts each several action, sees in humble deeds of duty and devotion the potency of illimitable grace.

J. E. C. WELLDON.

The Afterward of God.

What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter.

S. JOHN xiii. 7.

I. **U**NTIL a man has become a partaker of this divine ‘afterward’ of repentance and forgiveness, he hardly knows how splendidly different life may become to him. You may have sometimes watched a lowering and stormy sunset, you may have felt oppressed to see the mountain masses of black cloud towering over the horizon, and then, as though after some fierce struggle, you may have seen the setting sun win the complete victory; you have seen it pierce, scatter, dissolve those heavy clouds, or, if any still remain, you may have seen the light transfuse them with glorious colours of gold and crimson. The clouds were ugly and threatening, but under the sunlight some of them have disappeared, and though in the sunset some still remain, the victorious alchemy of heaven has transmuted them into an unimaginable pageantry. So it is in God’s dealings with us. Clouds darken the blue sky; yet the clouds are but transient and earthly vapours, and at the touch of the sun they vanish or palpitate through and through with splendour. So sin is the darkest blot on the beauty and perfectness of God’s heaven; but what is a cloud to the sun? and what is the sun before that Sun of Righteousness, which rises upon the world with healing in its wings, and which Sun, whether we see it or not, shines always in heaven’s meridian?

II. Now, can you tell me of any thoughts which can lighten the load of this generally unhappy life except the belief in God’s afterward? If Christ had to endure to the uttermost the sorrows caused by the natural events of life, and still more by the wickedness of mankind; if He had to bear with interfering, quarrelling, unfaithful brethren—His foes being those of His own household; if He had to repeat the proverb that ‘the prophet never has honour in his own country’; if the world hated Him because He was not of the world;

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if in a perverse generation, even that which took itself for and posed as religion was bursting with spite, malice, and calumny against Him; if He was brought into daily contact with man's meanness, ingratitude, and ruthless cruelty, do we not see that it must be a part of our destiny, either in that way or in other ways, to suffer as Christ suffered, if we ever hope to be partakers of His resurrection? If Christ, in the deep words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'learned obedience by the things that He suffered,' how can it be otherwise with us? The disciple is not above his Master, but every one, when he is perfected, shall be as his Master. If there be any comforts in the trials of life, anything which renders endurance possible, any consolation from unspeakable sorrows, any tender compassions or mercies, otherwhere than in the thought of God's afterward as manifested in Christ, I for one know not of it.

The one great object and significance of life is to choose the good and refuse the evil; to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be saved; to escape from sin which is our curse, our misery, our destruction every day that we live in it; to fly for refuge to that hope which is set before us. If we do this, life, even at its worst, will not rob us of our faith in God. Come pain, come sickness, come utter failure, come great bereavement, come death and judgment and eternity, come all that man's injustice and cruelty can inflict upon us, still God will not be silent to us. 'I saw,' said George Fox, 'that there was an infinite ocean of death and of darkness, but an infinite ocean of life and love flowed over that ocean of darkness, and in that I saw the infinite love of God.' Life ceases to be unintelligible and intolerable when that ray falls on it out of God's eternity, for in that gleam of eternity which thus pierces the blackest clouds of time, we see clearly written the words of Jesus, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt recognise hereafter.'

DEAN FARRAR.

The Agony of Betrayal.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. S. JOHN xiii. 21.

I. **W**HEN we consider the Agony of Betrayal, we notice at once how it differs from the Agony in the Garden. For the latter we have no predictive forecast. Prophecy does not prepare us for that fearful scene. This cannot be said for the former. The Psalter contains some marked anticipations of the traitor's deed. Piety has, besides, seen it foreshown in some historical incidents, one

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of which was long before the production of the Psalter, viz. the sale of Joseph by his brethren. It must not, however, be forgotten that, while the motive of Judas may have been mixed, that of Joseph's brethren was, beyond a doubt, to dispose of their brother without incurring the guilt of bloodshed. Probably the most that can be said is to recognise in each similarity of fact. It would be extremely arbitrary to regard the betrayal of Joseph as a designed type of the betrayal of Jesus.

Very different is the teaching of the Psalms of David. In some of these we are prepared for the perfidy by predictive anticipations of Judas's treachery, based upon his intimacy with Christ. In our Lord's Paschal discourse, He refers to His personal knowledge of His Apostles, even of the unhappy Judas. He connects his treachery, on the divine side, with prophecy. He recognises the correspondence between the prediction and its fulfilment as influencing the convictions of His followers. 'I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me.' The same principle appears in S. Peter's address before the election of S. Matthias. He combines two references from the Psalter in one composite whole. The one dealt with the desolation of the traitor's dwelling, 'let his habitation be void.' The other dealt with the succession to his office: 'his bishopric let another take.'

These passages indicate the place which the perfidy of Judas held in the mind of God, as it is revealed in the Psalter.

II. The elements of the Agony of Betrayal were at least threefold. Our Lord would see the bearing of the perfidy upon the future work of the Apostles, especially amongst their own countrymen. He would also see the terrible reaction which would sweep like a storm over the life of Judas, whenever the hour of awakening came. He felt, as we may never feel in the same degree, the anguish of friendship betrayed by perfidy; for as it is true that the lower the nature, the less the suffering, so it is true that the higher the nature, the keener the suffering. In Christ we have the ideal of human nature, living and loving before our eyes. He was the very essence of sympathy, pure, because sinless, and therefore unselfish. He—let us not shrink from saying so—would welcome, in the deepest depths of His being, that sympathy which was such a solace to others. The prophetic words of the Psalter are full of meaning. 'I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.'

These conditions reveal the intensity of the Agony of Betrayal. Here we may learn something of the sorrow and of the torture of a soul who, having relied upon and even enjoyed true friendship, has now to undergo the grief and the woe of perfidy, and the prostitution

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of confidence, of intimacy, of knowledge, to the hurt of Him who so generously bestowed all. Nor may we doubt that all this was intensified by the peculiar position of the traitor. He was the bursar of the little band. He well knew the privations to which their Master had been exposed, and how uncomplainingly they had been accepted. He had, no doubt, seen Him pass nights with no warmer shelter than the deep blue of the Syrian heavens. He was well acquainted with the struggles and the straits of a party, who to the last expected the compensation of power, and probably of affluence. The knowledge which was extended to Judas as well as the knowledge which he acquired; the commonness of the social lot which marked the twelve and their Master; the exquisite tenderness, the unwearied self-sacrifice, the holy courage of the Christ, and His appreciation of each,—seem to be voiced in words which have no other application in His great biography: ‘For it was not an enemy that reproached Me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated Me that did magnify himself against Me; then I would have hid Myself from him. But it was thou, Mine equal, My guide, Mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.’

III. To what, let us inquire, is this darkest of all dark deeds to be attributed? The ready answer is popular and is traditional. The betrayal is said to have been perpetrated through that ‘love of money, which is the root of all evil.’ The position which Judas held amongst his brethren lends itself to this idea. He is further spoken of as a ‘thief.’ At least, he was beyond all doubt a dishonest man, and he illustrates what we occasionally observe, that a man’s position seems sometimes so ordered as to give loose rein to predispositions, to tendencies, to besetting sins. This is amongst the most obvious of the perplexities which cluster round the moral government of the world.

And yet may not this theory of Judas’s conduct be somewhat superficial, or even hasty? The sum which he received as the price of blood was but £3, 16s.—a pitiful reward for an act which was considered by the Sanhedrim as a piece of most important service. If Judas’s motive was thus mercenary, the sum paid is out of all proportion, either to the cupidity of the motive or the gravity of the service. May not another account be given of this nefarious transaction? May we not see in the tone of our Lord’s earlier teaching that which appealed to the tone of the Apostle’s mind and in the perplexities which His later utterances created? may we not discern the crafty, unspiritual speculation and daring of precipitancy and of hazard?

Might he not resolve upon a high and a hazardous scheme? Might he not, perplexed by past sayings, and by present conditions,

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determine to force Christ to declare Himself? This explanation is not unsupported by the horrible sequel. His plot and his plan failed. The first step is taken, and his hope may have been high. The issue of that step is the opposite of what he may have hoped it would be. Instead of Christ being a crowned King on the throne of David, He is condemned to die. The earlier hatred of the Sanhedrim is now red and ripe for murder. The Apostle is at length awake to his sin; awake to the enormity of his audacious gambling with the mission of His Master; awake to the dark discolouration with which he had stained and dyed the declaration of the Lord. The swirl of the tempest which broke upon his soul sweeps him on and on, until the hand that clutched the price of blood spurns it as a base and burning curse, and he seeks flight from himself in the grave of a self-murderer!

W. LEFROY.

Repentance and Forgiveness Daily Needed.

He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet. S. JOHN xiii. 10.

WE may read the words of the text in two chief senses.

I. First, the feet are those members of the body which have the most literal contact with the earth. The sole of the foot actually presses the earth's surface. The head may be erect, the eye may range at large over God's handiwork, the heart may be full of pure affections and heavenward aspirations: but the feet must rest upon matter, and connect us, whether we will or no, with the dust from which we were taken. Hence the peculiar aptitude of the figure employed. When our Lord speaks of a Christian man,—already washed from his sins, already consecrated by the indwelling Spirit,—as needing still evermore to wash his feet, He suggests to us that there is, in our necessary contact with the world, a certainty of spiritual soiling, an inevitable staining and spotting of the baptismal purity, which will become a defilement and a contamination if it be not promptly and effectually washed away by an ever new application of the blood of sprinkling. Repentance and forgiveness are daily needed, because the feet are in daily contact with a miry and muddy world.

1. We feel it in the intercourse of pleasure.
2. We feel it in the intercourse of business. A Christian man must be in the world, though he would not be out of it.
3. We feel it, not less, in the intercourse of affection.
4. And we feel it, not in pleasure only, or business, or affection, but (in the strictest sense) in the discharge of duty.

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II. But the feet, which connect us with earth, are also the instruments of human activity. We have spoken of the washing of the feet as expressing the need of repentance and forgiveness in reference to the Christian's daily contact with the life of this world. Involuntarily, or through infirmity, he admits and suffers from an influence exerted upon him by the world that is, and by the things that are seen. To cleanse himself from the effects of this influence, by a repentance daily renewed, is one part of his duty. To be assured of the forgiveness of this ever fresh contamination is one part of his blessedness.

But now we have to reverse the picture, and see the cleansing spoken of in a different light.

The feet are now the instruments of activity; those members of the body by which a man walks in the path of duty, runs the race set before him, and presses towards the mark for the prize of his high calling. 'Your feet shod,' S. Paul says in this sense, 'with the preparation,' the preparedness, or readiness, 'of the gospel of peace.'

Every day of this mortal life has its duties, and the duties of to-day cannot possibly be crowded in among the duties of to-morrow.

'All the days of our life'—such is the inspired description of man's season of grace; such the merciful subdivision of a work absolutely incomprehensible in its sum; such the arrangement and simplification of duties, the whole weight and burden of which, in one aggregate, would be indeed too heavy for us to bear.

1. We all of us recognise certain duties as essential conditions of a growth in grace. Every one knows that he ought to secure a certain time, twice or thrice a day, for special and earnest communication with God. Every one knows also that he ought every day to read the Word of God, and to pray over it. To attend upon the public worship of the Church—all on Sunday, and all who can on week-days also; to come willingly, and to come constantly, and to come expectingly; to frequent the Holy Communion, once a month at the least; and to take every opportunity given by the ministry of the Word, of learning what is the way, and how to walk in it; these things are matters of obvious duty, and few Christians pretend not to recognise them. But even in these things—and most of all in the most secret of them—what negligences and carelessnesses have we all to mourn over!

At the very outset—in the very key and citadel of our being—before we even enter upon questions of a more public or relative duty—we find ourselves verily guilty in the first elements of a Christian's work below.

2. Who can wonder if he who thus demeans himself towards his God is neglectful also towards his brother?

The repentance and forgiveness which a Christian daily needs is at

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least a repentance for good left undone, and a forgiveness for opportunities disregarded and passed by. The feet which need to be washed from contact with the world, need also to be washed from the defilement of selfish neglects and culpable indolences.

III. Two cautions are suggested by the topic now before us.

1. Mistrust not the great cleansing. 'He that is washed'—he who hath once been truly cleansed from guilt by faith in Christ—'is clean every whit.' Christ does not mock us with shadowy promises, with illusive hopes.

The experience of daily shortcomings is no proof, in itself, of being disregarded, deserted, or disowned. He who would daily 'wash his feet' must not mistrust the one great cleansing.

2. On the other hand, there is need of this perpetual recurrence to the fountain of grace. These daily shortcomings, these daily omissions, these daily contaminations and contacts with the world, do make repentance and forgiveness the daily need of the Christian. If a man so trusts in the one original cleansing as to neglect these, he has cause to tremble as to the efficacy even of that.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Work.

I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. S. JOHN xvii. 4.

THAT was the cry, the solemn, the majestic, the unflinching cry of the representative Man when, passing the Kedron on the night of His sufferings, He began the great oblation by which we are saved. Now, once and again, you and I are permitted by God's providence and in the course of the Church's teaching,—we are permitted—not I hope without serious thankfulness, not I am sure without deep heart-searching—to stand face to face with the Passion of the Lord: serious thankfulness that time is still given to every one of us to take care to make the most of opportunity, and to retrace our steps if our steps have gone wrong; and great heart-searching lest, perhaps, not like the green grass receiving the falling showers, and bringing out the flowers of spring, but like the cold, grey, soft, and lifeless consistency of the sand under the receding sea, we may come once more face to face with the fact of facts, and our nature may be left, not rich and fruitful, but cold, and black, and hard. God give us grace, as once again we cross the threshold of Passiontide, to be thankful for a renewed opportunity, and to search our hearts that we may use it well. Now, this I would say to you, that in our meditations, which can be only short and suggestive on so great a subject as the Passion, three truths must govern our hearts.

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I. First, there can be no question in any religious mind that God is very near to us, 'in whom we live, we move, we have our being'; but the human heart strains with great fatigue towards the illimitable, and the eternal, and the infinite, and it flags in its flight, and, as it flags, it is very much tempted—it is very much tempted amid the common things of time, and face to face with the great thought of God, to give the whole thing up in distress and despair. That, surely, is half the history of serious atheism—I submit, of serious deism. For to be near God in fact is one thing, to be near God in thought is another. Now the Christian revelation comes and says: 'Whatever may be said for atheism and deism, this can be said for Christianity: God whom we feel so near and yet so far away, God who strains our thought and whom we never can quite forget, God put in contact with you, is the yearning of our humanity.' God is brought within arm-sweep, within absolute touch, in Jesus Christ.

II. This is the first truth; and the second truth that must govern our meditations is this. There are, I submit, two great forces in this world with which no other forces can compare. One has the magnificence of a universal law, and it has the colour of a religious fact. It is fiercer than the sea, it is stronger than the storm, and yet it touches every heart. Sometimes you find its shadow in the court, sometimes you find the shrouding of its power in the palace, but, wherever you go, you know it is a form that men may reason about or argue about as they please, that men may construe as they choose, but there it is. There is another force, side by side with that—the highest moral force that ever has been brought to bear, or ever yet shall be brought to bear, upon that strange, sad, romantic thing, the human heart. You may drag this force through the mud, you may travesty it, you may make it a simulacrum and call it a likeness, you may have it almost destroyed by a cynic's philosophy, but it is the force of forces. There are two powers in this world—love and death. Now, mark, those two great powers which play upon us, they try conclusions in the person of God in the Passion; and if God be near us in Jesus Christ, then God is not only brought near us, but He is brought near us under the circumstances of a tremendous conflict, and that is the conflict between the two most powerful forces, love and death. And the Christian preacher and the Christian Church assert that, to speak with great restraint, in the Passion of our most dear Master the cry of the mystic prophet is true—love is as strong as death.

III. And then there is the third truth which must govern our meditations. If God be near in our meditation, if God be near in Jesus, if love and death meet in their highest conflict and in their final and splendid—so the Christian thinks—their splendid expression

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on the Cross, then we remember that all the magnificence of God's eternal being, that all the sweetness of Christ's human nature, that all the final expressions of what man yearns for, and what you and I desire, will be found—they must be found—in the last great sermon on the Cross, given to us to instruct, and to sanctify, and to redeem.

In the uplands of Attica, when you travel among the mountains you find great peaks of rock, and you find slopes covered with olives, and here and there you find a stray pine, and there and here the pasture for the shepherd, and sometimes the cornland; but what you do find is that, be it rock or be it pasture, or be it the pine or be it the corn, under the clear light of the Attic atmosphere, under the sunlight and under the shadow, there is a sentiment, there is a touch belonging to each district, all its own. In human life there are districts like the uplands of Attica, districts across which I submit that you and I must pass in the toils of our mortal pilgrimage, sometimes a place like the ploughed land, sometimes romantic like the olives and the pine, but they have their own sentiment, but they have their own power, according to the light and the shadow they are placed under.

What I challenge you to do this week is this: Take some important districts of your experience and place them—oh, place them with great sincerity—under the light and shadow of the Passion. Take one district for a moment,—commonplace, easy,—ere we go. Whatever else is true or false of man, it is perfectly true that for every one of us life expresses activity, and activity in a commonplace way comes out in work. Go anywhere in the world, and you will never find that great word 'work' so strong and powerful as in the city. Here is the place of commercial enterprise, here is the place of fresh investments, here is the place of new undertakings. If any man may be sure of speaking to the heart of a congregation faithfully on a fact, then that man who speaks in the city may be quite sure that he is understood when he says 'work'; and when you come down from great enterprises to smaller things, from the head of a great firm down to the last lad that has been engaged in the office, or the last porter that carries the messages, there is an understanding of work. Our ancestors understood, so do we. It is a district of life. Now, mark my message. Put it under the light, put it under the shadow of the Passion. If ever there was an age when work was remembered, it is this age, when men are discussing—but the pulpit and the parson are not the place nor the person to enter into—the details of economic difficulty; but the pulpit and the parson are the place and the person to appeal to the individual soul as to labour, and to ask it, 'What do you mean, under the light and the shadow of the Passion?' You and I have

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to work. Go back to the Crucified, and let me remind you you will find these things. Among all His works there was no work so beautiful, so dreadful, so calm, so determined as His death; and the first message I submit that He left behind to the working creature is diligence, that the world cannot endure an idler, that if you are to follow the path of the Passion, I do not care where your work is, you must be diligent.

And the next message that He left was honesty. Certainly He might have evaded the great trial, and the contumely and scorn of the night of His sorrow, if He had made a manoeuvre or played a part. I am told—I know nothing about it—that the commercial life of England is undermined by dishonesty. I can well imagine that there are few trials more tremendous to the young men that have to work in the city than to be truly honest, without much sympathy, and very often without much hope. Look up to that Life that seemed a failure. Whatever He did, He entered the reality of things. He was not only diligent, but determinedly honest.

And then there is the last thought on the district of work. It is this. They that follow Him who died must indeed desire diligence and seek for honesty; but, stand where you may in this age, do not forget this: the temptation of the moment—so it seems to me—is to make a show, to create an impression, to stand on stilts, to be heard of in the newspapers, to carry out what my American friends used to call—I hope I may say, without forgetting the dignity of the place I speak in—to carry out a ‘big boom.’ Now, the work of the Passion was marked by its hidden reality. Oh! do not forget, young Christian, face to face with your dying Master, to work diligently, honestly, hiddenly, not because they talk of you in the newspapers, not because they praise you in the office, but because the great and blessed and beautiful and lasting One has given you a work to do, and He will take the measure of it, and He will reward you. The last message of the Passion under the government of those great thoughts and in this district is to work hiddenly, to remember and value, not what is flash, not what is telling, not what is popular, but remember the hiddenness and the reality of things. Take that district of your life-work and place it under the light of the Passion, and then remember this: across the Kedron He said, the Man of men: ‘I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.’ Do not despise your common duty, but, under the shadow of the Passion of your Master, remember its dignity. God gave it you to do. Watch it in the shadow. Certainly we are reminded that our work must come to an end, that the night is coming and that the day is short-lived, and that we must make the most of our opportunities.

CANON KNOX LITTLE.

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The Eucharist.

As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. I CORINTHIANS xi. 26.

I. 'AS often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' Notice this fact. The Christian Eucharist is the one distinctive feature of Christian worship—it is that, I mean, by which it is differentiated from all other systems of religion. It is quite true that bread and wine have been offered to God in sacrifice, and that bread and wine have been received in sacred feasting, in God's presence, in religions that existed before, or have existed side by side with, the religion of Jesus Christ. I know quite well that all down through the fifteen centuries of Jewish worship, bread and wine were offered, morning by morning and eve by eve, on God's altar, by God's express command. I know quite well that the meat offering and the drink offering are as marked features in the developed systems of heathen worship as they were of the worship of Jewry, or are in the worship of the Christian Church. But what distinguishes the offering of the meat offering and drink offering in Christendom from their offering in all other systems of worship is this, that in all other systems of worship the meat offering and the drink offering are always offered in connection with a bleeding offering; they are dependent offerings. The lamb with its meat offering and its drink offering is the one offering which is to be presented unto God. But here we see a remarkable phenomenon. Throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, bleeding offerings have ceased to be, and in their place is the bloodless offering of the Christian Eucharist. In common with man, always and everywhere, we offer unto God bread and wine; but it is our privilege alone to offer them independently as far as any reiterated sacrifice which we present is concerned. And if there is one fact which cries aloud our Lord's *Τετέλεσται*, 'It is finished,' and brings the power of His Cross visibly before us, it is this fact, that we, through the power of His consummated sacrifice, now rear bloodless altars where blood-stained altars stood; now present to God, without alliance with the bleeding offering, the meat offering and the drink offering that were not presented thus of old; and that the wails of ancient worship are changed into the loud thanksgivings of Christian adoration as we gather round the feet of our Lord in the Eucharist, there with the ransomed within the veil to cry to Him, 'Worthy art Thou that wast slain, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.'

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II. Then we see clearly and distinctly the intimate connection that exists between the Eucharist and the Passion of Jesus Christ. If that Passion had not been endured; if the great act consummated upon Calvary is not the great sacrificial act that Christians through the centuries have believed it to be, then one thing is quite certain: our songs of adoration must die away on our lips when we gather round the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, for that sacrament is nothing else than this, the sacrament of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Yes, but S. Paul tells us that this sacrament is not only commemorative and historical, but that it is also prophetic. 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup' (of the Lord), 'ye do show the Lord's death till He come.'

The Blessed Sacrament not only proclaims to us the gospel of the Passion, but it proclaims to us that great gospel which is the centre and basis of all Christian hope: the gospel of the second coming of Jesus Christ our Lord. And since this holy rite is in creed and in action, they who preach it look back upon the first Advent, and recognise and confess its redemptive aspect, and they look forward to the second Advent and recognise it and confess it as being the one great act in which that redemptive work on Calvary will reach to its full and to its glorious climax. And in this present, as we live beneath the shadow of the altar, the gaze of our faith is fixed upon the Redemption, consecrated in Christ's first coming; the eyes of our hope are fixed on the glorious consummation of His work in His second coming, and in the meantime we wait with the repose of love, giving ourselves up to His sweet ministries, especially in the great sacrament of love, drawn to that sacrament, and living under the shadow of the altar in the conviction that 'as often as we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we do show the Lord's death till He come.'

III. Yes, but let us pass further, and ask why it is that there is this intimate connection between the Blessed Sacrament and the first advent of Jesus Christ and the second advent. You see there are three distinct things that stare us in the face here: first, the advent of our Lord in the days of His humiliation: secondly, the coming advent of our Lord in His glory; and between the two, a distinctive sacramental rite—'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup' (that is, in this present), 'ye do show the Lord's death till He come'; that is, that He died in that past until He come in the anticipation of that future. Now, we may be certain of this, that this is not a mere artificial arrangement; there must be something in the Blessed Sacrament which makes it fit to stand between the advent consummated in Christ's redemptive death, and the advent of His coming glory. What is that connecting thing? I answer that the one thing that marks out the Blessed Sacrament, as being what it is,

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midst Christian rites, is that, in a special sense, it is the sphere of our dear Lord's presence. Our Lord's presence and His humanity are revealed to us under three distinct conditions. First, He has been present in the days of His historical life under conditions of bodily humiliation. Secondly, He will be present after His second coming under conditions of glorification. But between these two conditions He is present with His people in a spiritual manner. Now let us distinctly understand what we mean by the term when we say that Christ is present in a spiritual manner. Continually those who use this term understand this, not that Christ is present actually, but only representatively; that He who is in heaven has sent the Holy Ghost to be with us during His absence; and that in strictness of speaking Christ is not present with His people on earth, but only the Holy Spirit who represents the absent Christ. I am not unfairly stating what we hear said continually in teaching and conversation, and what we read continually in Christian literature. But this will not do. The spiritual presence of Christ means not that He is absent, and that another is representing Him, but that He is present now under conditions which are only possible through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost. But it is not the full truth that Christ is absent from the earth, and only present with us by representation; the full truth is that Christ is present on the earth now with His people, under conditions which are possible through the co-operation with Him of God the Holy Ghost. For instance, when he commissioned His Apostles to go forth into the world, and to rear the Catholic Church, what did He say? 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Again, when He would comfort them who thought that their days after His departure would be as sad and solitary as the days of orphans, what did He say? 'I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.'

IV. The manner of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist of necessity eludes all definition, because it eludes all thought. Certainly, the popular explanation of that presence, which is accepted in Western Christendom, is as untrue theologically as it is unthinkable scientifically. And no theory of the Sacred Presence that ever has been elaborated by the human mind, whether it be the transubstantiation of the Papacy, or the consubstantiation of the Lutherans, has ever done anything but perplex and add confusion to the question. But the fact remains. It is a spiritual presence. You remember how, during His earthly ministry, when men were offended at the statement of Eucharistic truth, He said: 'Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are

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spirit, and they are life.' In other words, what He teaches us is this Faith can lay hold upon the fact that the Eucharist is the meeting-place between the sinner and the Saviour; faith can lay hold on the fact that under conditions of presence which are not revealed, He is verily and indeed present in the Blessed Sacrament. Faith can give its opportunity to Him to be acted upon by Him there, and have its assent to the words of Christ confirmed by the inner testimony of the sweetest spiritual experience. But theology can never pass beyond this. We have to believe in the verity of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist, to turn away from every attempt to define it, because the definition is in the sphere of the human, whereas the mystery is in the sphere of the spiritual and the divine. But this is the reason why there is connection between the altar and the first coming, that He who was on earth under the uttermost humiliation in His first coming, and He who is coming under conditions of glorification at His second coming, comes to us in His Church, and especially in the Blessed Sacrament, to bring to bear upon us the powers of His first advent in order that we may be ready to meet Him at His second advent. 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come.' And it is so. CANON BODY.

Gethsemane.

Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.
HEBREWS v. 8.

CALLED of God a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, Christ came into the world to fulfil a splendid mission. He came into the world to meet the deepest needs of man, to be the one true Priest of humanity. Man needed such a priest; he would have needed the mediatorial ministry of a priest had he not sinned, in order to minister to him God's light, and God's sanctifying grace. But, alas! man had sinned, and his need of a priest is intensified by the consequences of his sin. He needs not only one who shall bring to him the gifts that the sinless need from their Creator, but one who shall bring him also that gift of reconciliation which the sin-stricken need. And, because He has to fulfil His work as Mediator among sinners, of necessity the conditions of His mediatorial life are changed. Had there been no sin in the race to which He ministered, then His ministry had been one of suffering without death. But since He comes to minister to sinners, He must sink to the deep depth in which they are, and it is not conceivable that He should minister to them as Priest except under suffering conditions.

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And the Christ embraces these suffering conditions. He is born that He may die. All through His life He follows the guiding hand of God, as it leads Him deeper and deeper, ever onward, into greater sorrow, until at length it leads Him to the Garden of Gethsemane, and the dereliction, and the suffering Cross. But whilst this is clear to us, it is not at first so clear what I wish to bring before you, namely, that not only is it necessary that He who would be the Priest of humanity, ministering to its needs by Himself becoming the victim of His own Priesthood,—not only is it necessary that He should live under suffering conditions, but it was through those suffering conditions that there was developed in Him the character of the perfect Priest. A priest must, in the first place, always be characterised by the virtue of obedience in his ministration. There is nothing which is more inconsistent than self-will and priesthood. The official priest appears before God's people wearing the stole, which is the outward symbol of the fact that he ministers under the yoke of Christ and His Church. True priestly ministry is never directed by self-will or self-pleasing. That is the ideal; I am afraid it is not true actually. Nevertheless, it is always a ministry under an external obedience. There is revealed to him when he shall minister, where he shall minister, what he shall offer, and the very conditions of his office are laid down to the most minute details in direct laws, and no priest really ministers in his sacerdotal vocation until he submits to the limitations and the restrictions, and the cross, and the crossing of self-pleasing and self-will, that every one must know he ministers under obedience.

I. Now, see how wonderfully this minuteness of our Lord's obedience in His priestly ministry is brought out to us, as in many other incidents, in one of the details of His Passion. Recollect the circumstances under which the fifth word was uttered. 'Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst,' that he might yield obedience to the great ritual of His Passion, as it had been revealed in prophecy or foreshadowed in type. Seeing that one detail of that ritual had not yet been accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He saith, 'I thirst!' It was no cry drawn from the lips by the constraint of a weakened nature: it was a splendid utterance, necessary for the perfecting of His priestly ministry upon Calvary, necessary for obedience. And so it is all through His life. Christ is always ministering under obedience. Obedient in the home, obedient to the Jewish Church, obedient to the civil authorities of His day, distasteful though those authorities must have been to Him: obedient not only in the yielding of positive conformity to the directions of God by submitting to limitations; obedient, as for thirty years out

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of His thirty-three He lingers in Nazareth; obedient as he refuses to anticipate in the hour of His ministry the time of His Passion; obedient in passing into Gethsemane and on to Calvary when the call of God comes.

Yes; but in the conditions under which this obedience was drawn out He was being educated in that obedience. It was no mere instinctive obedience: it was the obedience of purpose developed under conditions of suffering. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. All that beauty of manifest obedience which we see in the ministrings of our great High Priest were developed in Him under the conditions of His life.

II. The second thing that a priest needs is sympathy. He is one who can have a fellow-feeling with those who are being tried and tempted, because He has gone through the like experience. And our Lord's wonderful sympathy is developed under the conditions of His suffering life. Father Carter, in one of his books, has pointed out what a wonderful contrast there is in our Lord's dealings with sinners before the Agony and after the Agony. Before the Agony there is such constant indignation, as, for instance, 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!' But after the Agony it is always sustained tenderness and gentleness of utterance. How tender is His dealing with Simon Peter, when He turns and looks upon him, and melts him into contrition! How tender in His pleading for those who had done Him to the death as He cried upon the Cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'! How tender in His dealings with that bandit whom He finds upon the Cross, and leads to repentance, up to the bliss of Paradise! How tender, as He ministers to His poor widowed mother in the hour of her desolation, finding her companionship in her loneliness and a home in her homelessness! How tender to the very end is Jesus on the Cross! And this because in Gethsemane He had learnt as He never had learnt before how intense is the power of the sensitive nature on the will of man; how difficult it is to crush it beneath the foot; how with what difficulty it is that man reaches forth into the path of a sustained obedience. He was uttering His own experience when He said to the disciples, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' And so there was developed in Him by the endurance of the very suffering which tries His children so intensely that wonderful tenderness and sympathy which must be found in the perfect priest.

III. Again, the priest must not only be characterised by obedience and by sympathy, but, thirdly, by sanctity. If it is to be a strong priesthood he must carry into it strength of character. Wherever this strength is lacking, sooner or later a fatal weakness will always

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make itself manifest in the ministry of him who lacks it. See how it is that all the beautiful capacities of the Lord's human character are developed, drawn out into expression, blended together to form one harmonious whole, to make Him perfect in His sanctity—it is under suffering conditions. The beauty of the character of the Crucified, which has had such wonderful power through the ages, is the wonderful way in which mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. Antagonistic conceptions of beauty of character blend in one unique whole. The passive Eastern and the active Western worlds look upon the Cross and see that which they crave fully expressed in Him in harmony with that which they believe to be a contradictory ideal. How is this all drawn out? How is the meekness, the long-suffering, how is the gentleness, the constancy of the Christ drawn out—not only made manifest, but actually developed in His character—but by His suffering? Where could have been combined this beauty of character if it had not been in Gethsemane?

CANON BODY.

Buried with Christ.

(*For Easter Even.*)

Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death. ROMANS vi. 4.

THERE is no day in the year has such an inexpressible peace as this day. We know what an awful calm there is in death, but this has connected with that an unearthly peace; it is indeed the great Sabbath, the Sabbath of Sabbaths. And as everything relating to our blessed Saviour must have a part in us, and be set forth in our lives, so must this His peaceful burial in the grave; as it is so well expressed in this day's collect. For it is by being 'buried with Him' in 'the mortifying of our corrupt affections,' that we attain unto this divine rest in Him.

I. In the epistle is set forth the doctrine of Scripture connected with this day, whereby the burial of Christ is by baptism to be impressed on our lives, engraven on our spirits; and in the gospel we come to the narrative of that burial. And all the detail of circumstances respecting it assists us greatly to realise that event, which, like all others connected with our blessed Lord, is not to pass away, but to be ever present with us. We know what an impression is made by the sight of a dead body, especially if it is that of one who has been near and dear to us; there is a stern, cold, deep reality about it,

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which teaches us more than many homilies could do: teaches us what a feverish, vain dream this our life is, with all its eager anxieties and pursuits; its business, and its pleasures, and its greatness. The motionless, speechless, insensible dead corpse gives us to know what we are, and what we must come to. There is no teacher like it. And every one who has felt this lesson has been for the time, for the moment, it may be, or hour, or day, if not longer, a different man. The world has lost its power, either to distress or please him, and appears in its true colours; and he sees what sin is before God. Yes; the one great truth of all truths is to know what sin is before God. Now, this is the wisdom of the grave, yet of itself it is but a cold and lifeless wisdom; but combined with the death and burial of Christ, and the contemplation of it, this wisdom is quickened by love; love is able to overcome the power of death, not by avoiding it, but by wrestling with it. I say it is the fact and reality of a dead body lying before us, which yesterday was like ourselves, that has power to impress us as no words can do; or rather, to bring home to us what words otherwise would feebly convey. And such must it be by reflection to bring before us Christ's Body, to enter the grave with Him, and keep Sabbath there with Him, perpetual Sabbath.

II. Let us shut ourselves in, little children in Christ, and close the doors about us, and put out, as belonging to us no more, the mad and too-alluring evil world. Let us enter often by deep meditation and prayer; but let it not be into our own tomb, but into that of Christ, to be there with Him; that as the dead bones of Elisha revived the dead man, so the grave in which Christ has been may be that to receive our mortal remains, that they together with Him may be quickened, and that our mortifications and consideration of death may be with His burial; that in the rock we may be hid; that our baptism may be to us the 'clean linen cloth' wherein His Body was wrapped with pious care. He had no sepulchre of His own, but is laid in that of another, that His sepulchre may be our sepulchre.

This reflection is full of holy peace, very consoling, and even refreshing; the dews condense in drops on that hard cold rock, and may give life to our dry spirits. Tears from the heart will collect there, and may refresh us; tears for ourselves will blend with tears for Him whose Body for our sakes lies thus mangled and broken before us. There is a sorrow that worketh death; and there is a godly sorrow that frees from death.

III. It is the Sabbath; but is Christ altogether gone and departed from His own? is He powerless in the grave, because His body lies lifeless there? No, not at all so: sin lies buried with Him; all that is human and earthly lies buried with Him, in order that we may live to God: it is our Sabbath, to be ever kept by us until we lay our

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bodies in the grave ; nay, after that, until we resume them again, if the will of God be so, at the great resurrection. It is the Sabbath-day : it was on this day that our Lord wrought His works of mercy, and pleaded for them that they should be done on this day, while the chief priests and Pharisees, as now, were the more full of enmity against Him. And what do we learn from this, but that while we are by baptism buried in the burial of Christ as to earthly hopes, desires, and affections, yet we are at the same time to be alive unto God, through the Spirit that quickeneth, in works of mercy and love ; but that in the meantime the enmity of the world ceases not,—we are not to expect it ?

ISAAC WILLIAMS.

Good Friday and its Lessons.

Now, from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

S. MATTHEW xxvii. 45.

THERE are two outward incidents recorded in connection with the story of the Crucifixion which always impress the mind with a sense of solemnity. One is the rending of the veil of the Temple ; the other is the darkness which is recorded to have passed over the face of the land. I propose to say a few words on the dark shadow which belongs to the best of things. However we may explain the darkness of the Crucifixion, whether we suppose that it overspread the whole empire, or the land of Palestine, or the Holy City alone, we cannot help seeing that it corresponded with the deep gloom which overspread the minds of the disciples, who must have thought, as their Master said, that this was indeed the hour of the powers of darkness. They must have thought that all was lost. But this great discouragement agrees with the general peculiarities of Christianity, on which we may dwell with profit in connection with this subject. We might, perhaps, think, looking at some of the prophecies, or looking at the likely results of a divine religion coming into the world, that all would be made smooth before it, that it would win its way at once, that all would acknowledge it. Not so in fact, not so the divine anticipation of its progress. As we read in the gospels, both our Lord and His Apostles are filled with apprehensions and forebodings as to the long and painful struggle, the corruptions from within, the assaults from without, the true light, almost stifled at times by strange aversions, strange misapprehensions, which should gather round it. We must not be surprised if we find it so to be. We must not be discouraged if we find that, after all, this divine light coming into the world of

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human mist and darkness has itself been at times obscured by that darkness; and now on this great day, this supreme trial of the Christian faith, it might have seemed that Christianity had turned out to be a failure. The grandest career, the holiest cause that ever dawned upon the earth, had ended not in a splendid triumph, but in a dismal, ignominious defeat. What, then, do we learn from this?

I. The first lesson is, patience and perseverance. We must be patient with others if they stumble in this darkness, if they do not at once find their way towards the truth. The world is a mixed world. The good which there is in it would not be so good as it is if there were no evil to struggle against it. We cannot, as in the German story, get rid of our shadow. We must make the best both of the light and of the shadow. 'Let those,' says S. Augustine, speaking of some who, as he thought, had gone very far astray in their religious opinions, 'let those be furious against you who are so dull as not to know with what labour the truth is found, who know not with what difficulty is healed the inward eye and the inner man, who know not with what sighs and groanings that cannot be uttered it comes to pass that, even in a very small degree, God can be understood.' There are subjects in the philosophical thought of a day of transition like ours where even angels may fear to tread, lest by an incautious or misunderstood word they should bring down the trembling avalanche, when for a time the boldest hold their breath in the hurricane eclipse of the sun. There is a darkness of twilight for the whole earth, or at least a shadow of suspense and of waiting, in which it may well be that some shall find it their first duty to stand and wait, for whom Luther's text and motto is their best device: 'In silence and in hope shall be our strength.'

II. And, secondly, the darkness of Good Friday at the Cross of Calvary is a likeness of the opposition which each one of us ought to be, and will be, called upon to face in doing his duty. Of every human being in this congregation it may be said, as of Jesus Christ Himself on this day, the Son of Man must suffer. Yes, if each one of us does in life what he thinks to be right, he will find that he has no easy task. He will find that he will be spoken against, he will find that to some, however reluctantly, he must give offence. Those only can avoid offence who shrink from their appointed tasks, who yield to everything, and who so pass out of life without being spoken against because they never will be spoken of at all. To be popular is, no doubt, a good thing. Of Christ Himself it was said that He was loved both by friend and foe, that He was in favour with God and man. But popular favour is not the first thing, it is not even the second thing, that we have to seek. If it comes, so much the better for us, but we must not frame our lives to seek it. We must

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rather remember the fine old motto, 'They say. What say they? Let them say.' That was an excellent phrase of the good judge Lord Mansfield, whose statue looks over this northern transept; I have often quoted it before, but I will quote it once again: 'True popularity is not that popularity which is followed after, but the popularity which follows after.'

III. And, thirdly, the darkness of the dismal tragedy of the Crucifixion, combined with what followed, reminds us of this yet further consoling truth. Failures are not perpetual failures. Good Friday was a failure as regarded all outward appearance; but after it came Easter Day, and Easter Day was a complete contrasting success. How often have we seen this falling and rising of unpopular causes! How often have we seen it within this generation! An opinion, condemned altogether as unlawful and anti-Christian, denounced by thousands, and then, not twenty, not twelve years afterwards, taught openly, with almost universal applause. Or, again, we have seen arise panics for the institutions of the country, the monarchy, the Church, the universities, magnified by the alarm of their defenders, or by the triumph of their assailants, as though destruction were close at hand; and yet in a few years, sometimes even in a few days, the clouds are dispersed, and the institution that seemed so fragile is more deeply rooted than ever. What do we learn from this? No doubt there have been, in the history of the world, tremendous failures. There have been hopes of inestimable value overclouded and destroyed. The execution of Calvary was a hideous calamity. The darkness of the dark ages, during which the brightness of Christianity was eclipsed on the fall of the Roman Empire, was a darkness over all the earth from the sixth to the ninth century. There is a sense in which in every crisis we may say there is a darkness over the land. There is a darkness of uncertainty. We enter into a thick cloud, and we know not in what precise condition we shall emerge from it. Many serious issues are before us, and they are cast on the most fluctuating of decisions. There is the darkness, too, of the complex motives, or want of motives, by which the actors of these great transactions are guided, ignorant, it may be, of the questions at stake, personal or local prejudices obscuring the judgments of all but a very few. There is a darkness by which the moral sense of large masses of the community on such occasions is liable to be obscured. Corruption, or the chance of corruption, intemperance, or the chance of intemperance, violent or unscrupulous language, on one side or the other,—all these things, at such a time, cause the hearts of some to sink, cause others to lament that the calm serenity of this sacred week should be overcast by the clouds of controversy, and should be lost in the smoke of battle. Yet here, also, there is a light—a light in the darkness. It

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comes both from experience and from hope. From experience, for we know that, on the whole, in past times, out of like trials the interests of liberty and of order, and therefore of civilisation and Christianity, have been worked out.

The cape round which the great Portuguese discoverer guided the European progress of discovery was once called the Cape of Storms; he gave it henceforth and for ever the name of the Cape of Good Hope. So may our successive capes of storms become to us the capes of good hope. The grandeur, the virtues, the wisdom, the love of Good Friday may be lights to lighten the feet of those that stumble in the darkness of our perplexing existence.

A. P. STANLEY.

Death and Sin.

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. I COR. xv. 56.

THE first aspect of these words is clear and vivid. They come before us and demand attention with a power to which neither the simplest nor the most critical mind can be insensible. There is something deep in them which goes straight to something deep in us. The rough lad who hears them read at his father's funeral in the village church may know where they touch him, and what it is they ask of him; the priest who reads them may be feeling how no familiarity changes in the very least the sharpness and penetration of their challenge; the most thoughtless may be finding that for once he cannot choose but stay to think. 'The sting of death is sin';—we may say what we will, we may almost do or think what we will; but while we live, and know that we must die, those words will keep, please God, some power to get at us and to recall us to ourselves.

I. The warning and the challenge, then, with which we are at once confronted, may be plain enough. But a change comes as soon as we begin to look into the words—to try to frame a definite conception of the truth which was filling S. Paul's mind and ruling all his thoughts as he so wrote. We cannot be content with discovering expressions more or less analogous in his other letters: for here the words fall within the strong inclusive hold of a great purpose; and parallel passages elsewhere may be suggestive, but can hardly be decisive in regard to their dominant and inmost meaning. And as we try to keep our minds fixed upon them, as we labour to think out into clearness and reality some answer to the question, In what sense is sin the sting of death, and the law the strength of sin? we may feel

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that we are touching truths which we can never grasp; that behind the words we use are vast, mysterious presences, whose import and issues and interdependence we can only know in part; and that the fragment we discern shades off into depths and distances far beyond our ken. What sin and death and law may in the fulness of their meaning be we cannot tell; and that partial apprehension which, if we are faithful and obedient, suffices amply for the guidance of life, the discipline of character, and the increase of light, will not suffice us if we want at once to round our thoughts into a system or to answer all the questions we can ask. 'The sting of death is sin';—it would be hard to say how far S. Paul is thinking of that unnatural power which accrued to death when man fell and sin entered into the world; when, as one has said, 'by sin death became a king, and got him a dominion, pale, hideous, terrible'; when 'he clothed himself with terrors, and made himself a palace of mankind.' Again it would be hard to say how far the Apostle is thinking of that more awful scene which lies beyond the day of death; how far, as he speaks of death, he links with it that certainty of the judgment to come which could shake even the mean and lustful heart of Felix with a terror that he could not hide. And then, 'the strength of sin is the law'. Here again many lines of thought are suggested when one reflects that probably about twelve months after he wrote these words S. Paul was writing the Epistle to the Romans; though I venture to think that such suggestions must be treated as subordinate to the demands of the passage in which the words here stand, and to their close connection with the preceding clause; so that we must not lose hold upon the thought that in some especial way it is to be the sting of death that sin is made strong by the law. Thus many avenues of meditation open out before us as we gaze into the depths behind the words: and each, it may be, looks as though it stretched beyond our utmost strength of penetration. It is with consciousness of this that I would try to speak this morning only of one fragmentary thought, which seems to rise out of the words, and which at times, perhaps, may bring, by God's grace, something of their force to bear on our lives.

II. 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.' Yes: for 'sin is lawlessness.' These words of S. John's carry us to the inner and unvarying character of sin: whatever outward form it wears, this is the common, constant quality of it; this we shall find at the heart of it. It is, says the Bishop of Durham, 'the assertion of the selfish will against a paramount authority. He who sins breaks not only by accident or in an isolated detail, but essentially, the "law" which he was created to fulfil.' It may be 'the law of his own personal being, or the law of his relation to things without him, or the law of his relation to God': for we may distinguish these

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three, though all alike proceed from God, as rays from the central light of His eternal law, and though none can be broken without infringement upon all. But whether it be primarily against his own inner life and health and growth that a man sins, or against the society in which he lives, or against Almighty God who is waiting to have mercy on him—whether it be the love of God, or the love of man, or the true unselfish love of self, that he disregards and casts aside in sloth or wilfulness or passion;—in every case the ultimate, the characteristic note of his sin is still the same: it is lawlessness: it is the abuse of will, thrusting away the task, declining from the effort, refusing the sacrifice wherein lay the next step towards the end of life, the man's one *raison d'être*: it is the distortion of faculties, the wrenching aside of energy, the perversion of a trust from the purpose marked upon it, from the design which conscience seldom, if ever, wholly ceases to attest, to a morbid use, to a senseless squandering, a listless, wasteful, indolent neglect, a self-chosen and self-centred aim. Whether the sin be quiet or flagrant, brutal or refined, secret or flaunting, arrogant or faint-hearted, its deep distinctive quality, its badness and its power for havoc lie in this, that the man will not have law to reign over him; that he will do what he wills with that which is not in truth his own; that he is acting, or idling, in contempt of the law which conditions the great gift of life, and is involved in his tenure of it.

1. 'Sin is lawlessness': and to persist in any sin is to go on, with ever-increasing ease and senselessness, it may be, beating off the everlasting law, ignoring or defying the essential rules of moral health and spiritual growth, rejecting in the law the Law-giver who created us to find in its ways our joy and strength. So do men go on who sin against the law of their own personal being. For instance, let us mark for a moment that dull rebellion of lawless thoughts, the perverseness, the ever-deepening disorder of a mind that swerves from its true calling wilfully to loiter or to brood about the thoughts of sin, thoughts of sensuality, or of jealousy, or of self-conceit. The high faculties of memory, reflection, fancy, observation, are dragged down from their great task: day by day the field for their lawful exercise is spread out before them: all the wonder, the beauty, the mystery, the sadness and dignity and wretchedness, the endless interests and endless opportunities of human life and of the scene which it is crossing—these are ever coming before the mind which God created to enter into them, to find its work and training and delight and growth amidst them: while over all His creatures, He Himself, the Most High God, is ready to lead on the mind from strength to strength, preparing it for that surpassing sight in which it may hereafter find its ceaseless exercise and perfect rest—the sight

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of His uncreated glory. Such is its lawful course: such are the good works which God has prepared for it to walk in: whatever may by nature be its strength or weakness, He will enable it by grace for such an end as this. And yet, all the while, in the dismal lawlessness of sin, it stays to grovel among the hateful thoughts of mean, degrading vices; or turns day after day to keep awake the memory of some sullen grudge, some fancied slight; to tend the smoky flame of some dull, unreasonable hatred: or to dwell on its own poor achievements, its fancied excellencies, the scraps of passing praise that have been given to it, the dignity that its self-consciousness is making laughable. Surely it is terrible to think that a man may so go on, and so grow old, continually stumbling further and further from the law of his own joy and health.

2. Let us mark, again, in the case of luxury, how a man may refuse year after year to listen to the law of his relation to his fellow-men; how he may be ever putting off until the end of this life the day of reckoning with that law which God fastened into his very nature when He framed him for the privilege, the happiness, the responsibilities of a social being. To gather round one's-self, in ever growing plenty and elaboration, all the means of comfort and pleasure which civilisation brings within one's reach; to shelter and enrich and decorate and soothe one's daily life with the outcome of others' toil and ingenuity; to take whatever one can get of all that has been won by the labour, the experience, the inventiveness, the suffering of the past and of the present; to let all this flow towards one for the ease, the pride or pleasantness of one's own lot, and then to make no real contribution to the work of one's own day; to shirk one's share of hardship and fatigue, to bear no part, with whatever gifts one has, in the painful efforts, the unselfish ventures, the exacting strain of mind or body to their utmost strength, through which the social order, that makes all this comfort possible, may move on its slow, costly course of progress towards a better, juster, happier, more peaceful state:—how can a life like this seem other than a continual lawlessness; a plain abuse of the conditions of one's place among mankind; an unnatural absorption of that which one is suffered to receive only in order that, only so far as, it may make one better able to repay one's due and thankful tribute to the welfare of others? It may be possible for some of us to thrust off that demand, to keep that law of social life at arm's length, as it were, year after year; it is possible for most of us to meet it with miserable inadequacy, with glaring disproportion between that which we receive and all that in any way we give. But conscience witnesses that wilful luxury is lawlessness; and that those who go on fancying that more and more is necessary or reasonable for themselves, while they think less and less of what is

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certainly necessary for others, must somehow have to meet the Nemesis of violated law. For 'the poor shall not always be forgotten: the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever,' and 'the Helper of the friendless' cannot in the end let man have the upper hand.

3. Or think again of the lawlessness of a prayerless life: the disorder, the disproportion, the atrophy and wasting that must come when the faculty for communion with God is never used, and love, the first law of our relation to Him, is never stirred by the realisation of His presence, the recollection of His love. The nature that is endowed with the capacity for prayer, the soul that can be filled with the disclosure of His goodness, the life that was meant to find its highest exercise, its point of illumination, its way to rise, in seeking Him, cannot without hurt refuse all this. Prayer is, for spiritual beings, a law of health—a law which we may put back and ignore persistently in this life if we will, but which we cannot change. The desire to pray may disappear, just as for a lazy man there may cease to be any pleasure in the healthy use of his limbs: like him, we may find it hard, distasteful work at first to take up again what we have long abandoned. But if we yield to that distaste, if we acquiesce in our inertness, we are withholding the effort which an essential law of our life demands from us; silently and sluggishly, or in impatience and vexation, we are saying that we will not have law to reign over us. God bids the soul press on to claim its goodly heritage; and the soul of the prayerless thinks scorn of that pleasant land and gives no credence to His Word. And so that which was made for Him is imprisoned in the world; that which should hunger and thirst after His righteousness is set to make what it can of the substitutes which this life offers; that which can receive the infinite and the eternal love is silenced with the things of sense and time.

III. Our own personal being, our relation to society, our relation to Almighty God, each has, we know, its law; and great is the peace that they have who love that law, and those who seek it walk at liberty. But while this life lasts, for its few precarious years, we can, if so we will, dispute, reject, evade, ignore the law. But not for ever: we must meet and own it some day, for lawlessness is sin; and sin, if we are not trying now by the grace of God to deal with it, must be the sting of death. For, surely, when we try to think what the moral law is, and where, as men in every age have owned, it lives and has its being, it is hard to see how we can demur to words like these: 'Those things that are held within the vault of heaven cannot flee from heaven save by drawing near to it; for howsoever far they go from the one part of heaven, by so much do they approach the other part. And even so, though a man will not be obedient to the

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divine will and ordinance, yet can he not flee from it ; for if he sets himself to flee from under the will that bids, he runs under the will that punishes.' We cannot think, if we try to think at all, that the soul, when it has done with this world, can go on trifling with the laws that it has slighted here : we know that sooner or later, somehow or other, that essential demand, ' Fast linked as Thy great Name to Thee, O Lord,' must needs be reckoned with ; and that the career of wilfulness must have an end. And death, as it comes among us, ought to make us think of this. For it is the great, indisputable witness of the arrest of wilfulness, the folly of a lawless will. In its awful steadfastness, its refusal of all compromise, resource, appeal, evasion, it shadows forth, as nothing else in this world, the ultimate certainty of law. No man, however rich or powerful or insolent or ingenious, can for one instant say it nay, or make the smallest difference in the way it deals with him ; the traveller might as well attempt to check the avalanche that is already thundering upon the fields of ice and snow above the ledge of rock on which he stands. We may come to terms with many of our troubles ; almost all bodily pain may now be more or less alleviated, though not quite all ; when sorrow comes, some of us may perhaps be able to divert our minds from it, or harden our hearts ; we may refuse to face the difficulties of our day, and make up phrases to conceal its miseries—and civilisation has made many inventions for prolonging the comfort of a selfish life ; but there is no way of making terms with death ; and when he comes, the utmost wealth has nothing to offer which he is not already clutching. Abruptly the sheer certainty of law breaks in among our confusions, and half-heartedness, and crooked ways : away go all the subterfuges, the half-truths, the means of forgetfulness whereby men get off facing facts ; and the puny, lawless, wilful heart is brought to book. Even if it could mean nothing more than this, that we are left to be for evermore what we have chosen to become, how could we bear to think of it ?

IV. It is amidst such thoughts as these that we may come to know the meaning and the power of the Cross of Christ, and the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour in dying for us. You will remember what are the words that follow those of which we have been thinking, ' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' S. Paul had known that grace of repentance, that power of renewal which the astounding love of God had sent into the world. For him old things were passed away, and all things were become new ; he had found that ever fresh reality of pardon which changes the whole look of life and death ; and amidst the things of time his conversation was in heaven. And so he springs in an instant

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from the awful thoughts of sin and death to the unhindered gladness of thanksgiving. Thousands since then have known, in part at least, what he knew of God's victorious and pardoning grace ; and we in His infinite compassion may know it too : for us, too, He has stored within His Church the means of that great deliverance, the power of that glad renewal. Yes, for all the past, for all our lawlessness and shame and backwardness, S. Paul's thanksgiving may be ours yet. Only, it is good for us to remember what was the life, the habit of mind and work, out of which those thankful and triumphant words arose in the very face of death. It was the life of one who lived by the faith of the Son of God ; as the slave of all men, constrained by the love of Christ ; in weariness and painfulness, and in much patience ; as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things : one who counted not his life dear unto himself, that he might finish his course with joy and the ministry which he had received ; and who, having suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ, still in all simplicity and truth could only judge himself to be the chief of sinners.

DEAN PAGET.

The Seven Words from the Cross

OUTLINES BY THE LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN

Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do. S. LUKE xxiii. 34.



SEE the perfect quietness, calmness, and order there are in the Saviour's mind, now entering into this great and last battle on the battlefield of the Cross, contending against the enemy in his last attempt. No excitement, no confusion, no anger ; but quietness, calmness, and forgiveness—'Father, forgive them.' And then look at His unselfishness in this : no thought of Himself, but for them. No crying out of His pain, nothing of that, of the insult and the shame and the wrong, no complaining at all ; but His anxiety is for those who are doing all this, lest they should hurt themselves : 'Father, forgive them,' an utterly unselfish prayer. We know how hard it is ourselves if we are in any sort of suffering ; I do not mean suffering when other people treat us wrongly, but when we are suffering from sickness, chronic sickness, pain, and we do not feel well. How easily we fall into selfishness, the selfishness of the invalid, wanting to be the centre of attention, the first to be thought of in the house and the family ; all the arrangements must be made for that one ! We gladly will do it, but the person that is sick and suffering should strive to look and see here in this most acute suffering the suffering on the Cross, and the absolute forgetfulness of self—no thought of self at all. 'Father, forgive them.' How much more bravely, how much more successfully, should we pass through many of our ailments and difficulties and tribulations, if we could forget ourselves, and in the middle of trouble, instead of turning to self and thinking how much we have been injured and wronged, and how hard it is to bear it, if we could be thinking of other people all the while ! So the

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Saviour here sets us that example of complete unselfishness : 'Father, forgive them.'

And then the reason why that He gives—'They know not what they do'! Ah! there, there the Saviour unveils for you and for me one of the mysterious characteristics of sin. When we sin we know not all that we do. 'They know not what they do.' It is an exposure here for our sakes that we should take warning that when we sin we do not know what the whole effects of it are going to be. In the beginning of life, when children are idle and careless, and will not attend and learn, they do not see how they are harming their future, how they will limit the happiness which God will give them, how they will one day bitterly regret that they had not made a better use of the early days for learning. It is a common, common thing,—we know not what we do when we do wrong. And so it is in all kinds of sin. We begin, and we think there won't much harm come from it. It is just a little beginning, something that we do not think quite right. At last we begin to know that it was certainly not right; yet we did not see the full harm, we did not feel the bondage of the habit which we were beginning to form, we did not see what its effect would be in the injury of our after life, the shortening of our memory, the shaking of our nerve, the dimming of our eye, the making us go back from the place in life in which God intended us to be. There is many a man who has had to take a second, or third, or fourth rank in life, because he fell into sin in early days, and he did not know how great the sin would be. 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

It is, indeed, a revelation to us of the deadly nature of sin, that it is so much worse in the end than we think it is going to be in the beginning. It looks such a trifling little thing, it looks as if it could bring us no harm—quite light like a flake of snow. What can be the harm in a flake of snow? and yet flake upon flake will baffle the power of this nineteenth-century science, and stop the carriages and the horses, and the trains, and all our commercial traffic. Only flake upon flake, a little thing upon a little thing: then you see the result of it. And so it is with sin; we know not what we do. And this word from the Cross may indeed save many and many a young person entering life, if they would but turn to it. Stop while there is time. Stop at the beginning, or the end may lead you to something that you never thought you would do. 'Now I am going to suffer for what I never thought to do,' were the words of a notorious murderer who suffered on the scaffold not many years ago. When he looked back on his dark career, he never thought it would end like that; but he went on step by step until he got accustomed to the darkness; then the deeds were done. So it is for us, standing at

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the Cross, to look and see how much we need of the forgiveness which this word contains. Think, for a moment, how many our sins of omission have been, how many things there are we have left undone which we ought to have done, how many prayers unsaid, how many kind deeds not done, how many hours wasted, how many thoughts that have been improperly employed—so many things we do not know; we cannot reckon up the number of the things we have left undone. We want this prayer for ourselves. Directly our mind at all comes back to the real condition of our life, it is certainly what we want, the prayer of the Saviour for ourselves. We cannot reckon up the sum of the debt of the things we have left undone.

And then, the things that we have done wrong, the injury that we may have caused to others, who can reckon it? When a child throws a pebble into a pond, you know how the circle is very small at first, and then it widens and widens till it reaches the rim. And so it is, I fear, very often with the sins of our youth. We may have suggested words or deeds or thoughts which may have gone widening, widening, widening; and who can tell how far the injury has reached which he may have been guilty of in days when he did not intend to do it, almost? We cannot tell how much injury we may have done to others. Our bad example, not going to church, not going to the Holy Communion, not saying our prayers, not reading our Bibles, being ashamed of God, not speaking up for God—we cannot tell how many people that we do not know may have been encouraged in evil by the evil that we have done. Directly we begin to think of the things that we have omitted to do that we ought to have done, and when we think of the injury that we in our lives may have caused to others, surely we need this prayer. And then, for ourselves, what might we have been if we had always done what we ought to have done, and not left undone the things we ought to have done, nor done things which we ought not to have done! How much clearer our view of spiritual things might be, how much more free we might be from the fear of man, how much stronger we might be in the love of God, how much bolder, braver, brighter, how much better witnesses, examples for Christianity, we might have been! O God, forgive us!

I think if it was only for this word we might well indeed, all of us, whatever our lives may have been, the best of us, we might all be glad to come aside to-day, and place ourselves beneath the Cross, and look up and say, 'O blessed Jesus, Thou who hast known me from the very first moment when I was born, Thou who didst give me my life, and Thou who hast known all that I have left undone that I ought to have done, and all the things that I have done which I ought not to have done, Thou who knowest all the

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injury that I may have done to others, oh, stop the injury to them, give them repentance for any wrong thing into which I may have led them, cleanse them by the power of Thy precious blood; and then, O blessed Jesus, let me, too, come within the power of this prayer. Forgive me what I have done wrong.' I think we need this prayer to save us from a kind of bewilderment and distraction and despair when we really think about our own lives, when we put ourselves into God's hands and ask Him to forgive the evil we have wrought in others and pardon what we have done wrong, and ask Him in the power of His precious blood to unmake all that we have made of ourselves that is contrary to His will, and remake us again in the power of His risen and ascended life, and pardon us and give us a place in this prayer of the Cross: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.

The first word was to those who were still His enemies. They were crucifying Him. This second word comes in true order, to one who had been His enemy, but now has repented and turned to Him. We know that it was part of the terrible shame of the Cross that the Saviour was led out through the streets as one of three malefactors. We know how hard it is sometimes when people say things about us that are not true; how we resent it, when we are what we call misunderstood and misrepresented, and our motives are misconstrued. And here the Saviour is led through the streets as a public criminal with two other malefactors. The crowd of people could make no difference. There they went to Calvary, all through the streets, and He had to die as an untrue man, as a man that richly deserved and got what he ought to have, his own deserts. And now the two are one on either side; and even when they were there, S. Matthew tells us that first both of them reviled Him. He had no comfort. They both reviled Him. But at last, S. Luke tells us—it may be the power of the prayer that He prayed, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'; it may be some wonderful expression of innocence and gentleness and love in the Saviour's face, hanging close to him, apart from the workings of his own heart; but we cannot tell—this we know, that, though he began by reviling the Saviour with his brother malefactor, at last the penitent thief turned, and said to Him, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' It was a splendidly phrased prayer. What I have just been saying would lead you to think he would say, 'O God, forget me; do not remember me, do not call to mind all the moments of my life I have wasted and misspent.' Not

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so. The penitent thief would not have anything left out of the Saviour's memory. He would have it all remembered, and, being remembered, pardoned in the remembrance. 'Remember me,' do not forget me, 'when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' Then the Saviour's answer, at once: 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'

If what I said just now must lead us all to the very edge of despair, thinking of how much untold injury we may have done to others and ourselves, here is a thought. The Saviour here shows us one whose life had been wrong up to the very last moment. He is dying on the cross as a malefactor, and yet when he turns to the Saviour, the Saviour pardons and forgives, forgives freely: more, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise'—a total pardon after all that life of violence, it may have been injury, to many others as well as wrong in itself. All that is pardoned and put aside. The Saviour made manifest in this how welcome the penitent is even at the last hour.

And yet we must not deceive ourselves here. We must be careful to see how much suffering the penitent thief endured, what faith he showed us, what courage. There is nothing here to make people careless in sin, or to put off their repentance needlessly till the last moment. Look at the penalty he paid, the penalty of the law. He was crucified. Both were crucified, the penitent as well as the impenitent thief. And then look how thoroughly he made confession of his sin. He distinctly says that he was receiving the due reward of what he had done. He did not wish to be passed off as a person that was being wrongly punished and wrongly crucified. He made an act of faith before the people round about him, spoke out, and rebuked his companion. There was most true courage in confessing his own wrongness in his past life. He reproved his companion and tried to bring him back, tried to do what he could to make amends, compensation, for what his life had been. And so he is pardoned and forgiven. After his pardon, it has always seemed to me also wonderful what he is allowed to suffer. After the Saviour had pardoned him, and given him the assurance, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,' after that he is allowed to hang still upon the cross. All that darkness he had to go through. The penitent thief was living on, and the darkness came on round about him. The Saviour seemed to leave him; and most awful of all, he had to see his own Saviour die and to hear Him utter His cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' I can hardly imagine a greater trial to go through than to have been hanging by the Saviour, and after he had put his complete trust in Him, then to see that Saviour die, die in agony upon the Cross close by him. Yet still he persevered, and yet still further. Then you remember that towards

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the close how the soldiers came round and broke the legs first of one and then of the other. I should suppose it must have been an additional trial of his faith. 'Does the Saviour really care for me? Am I to be in Paradise this evening, when He lets me be so roughly treated, when I am to be treated just like my brother malefactor, my legs to be broken?' Yet so it was. I think there is a warning here for any who might presume upon forgiveness as though it mattered little whether we repented soon or left it till the last moment.

But there is what I take it may perhaps be more helpful to-day. There is surely an intended comfort here for all truly penitent people who find in the days of their true penitence that they have to suffer, that they have to endure a good deal, many a suffering, many a disappointment, many a trial, to be roughly handled by other people, to go through times of darkness, depression, despondency. There are troubles which, when they beset a person, are apt to make him think, 'Can my repentance be true? can I really be forgiven? can I be accepted by God?' And here is a most merciful picture given to us in this history of the penitent thief, of one whose pardon we are assured of. His life we know was most wrong up to the very end, but his pardon we know was most complete. The Saviour with His own lips told him that that very day he should be in Paradise. And yet between the pardon and his death, how he seemed to have been left by the Saviour to suffer! So it may be with some of us. It may be, perhaps, that this is the meaning of the mysterious word which the Saviour spoke to Ananias when he was sent, you know, to baptize Saul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles. When Ananias was told to go and baptize Saul, he as it were objected to the Saviour that He was going to be too kind. He said, 'Oh, I have heard a great deal about this man'; and then he proceeds to show how much harm Saul had done. What does the Saviour say? 'Go on, go on; baptize him. I will look after all that; I will show him what things he shall suffer for My name's sake.' It has often seemed to me that that may mean that we are not tender enough, gentle enough, to administer the wonderful discipline which the Saviour knows the soul of His saint will require. And, therefore, while sometimes penitent sinners seem to be let off too cheap in the eyes of the world, the Saviour looks after the inner discipline of the heart, and there is trouble, and the way of penitence is a way of sorrow and difficulty and trial, which the eye of the world cannot see. But the Saviour knows it, and the Saviour will administer the discipline and the trouble just as we are able to bear it, not too much, yet enough, so that the soul shall be perfected and be ready to be with the Saviour in Paradise. So the great Apostle Paul had a hard and suffering, a trying, and often apparently an abandoned life.

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He was imprisoned, he was scourged, he was beaten, he was shipwrecked, and yet all the while he was the chosen vessel to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. So here this penitent thief, to whom the Saviour promised, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,' had to pass through a period of wonderful suffering and apparently of neglect.

Woman, behold thy son; . . . son, behold thy mother.

We follow here the order of our Lord's last words. They were begun in all that quietness and absolute unselfishness, not speaking of Himself, but taking the outer circle as it were first, and beginning with those who were His enemies: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'; then, turning to one who had been up to the last moment His enemy and then had turned, the penitent thief, and saying to the penitent malefactor, the man upon the gallows, as we should say, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' When we in our modern newspapers read of an execution being settled for such and such a day, let those of us who can in the interval pray for the poor person who is to suffer the penalty of the law. One lesson from the penitent thief should be to have faith in people's unapparent capabilities. We do not know what works in the hearts of men. They may look rough and hard, and they may perhaps be tenderer than our own, and be in Paradise before we are, if ever we by God's mercy get there. It should teach us not to judge hardly other people. We know not what God may be doing with their souls. The man on the gallows, to that man the Saviour says, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' Let us pray for those on whom we hear the sentence of the law is passed. It may be a soul will be saved, though their bodies will suffer.

Then the Saviour turns, as you know, now, but only now, not before. His eye, as we may reasonably suppose, rests upon His Mother, and then He looks to her and says, 'Woman, behold thy son,' and then to S. John, 'Behold thy mother.' The Blessed Virgin must have wondered, except she had such perfect trust, that He should have spoken to one and another and not a word to herself. But that word came now. And it has often seemed to me to be a most precious harmony of the first and the fifth commandments: the first commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and have none other God but Him'; and the fifth commandment, 'Honour thy father and mother.' And sometimes it is not easy to see how to carry out these two commandments, to give ourselves to God and to attend to our family duties. Here I think we have an example of the perfect

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solution of it. Look at the obedience which the Saviour's life sets before us, His own home life in the little village of Nazareth; it is surely wonderful. If the Saviour, we should have fancied, was pleased to come down from heaven, He who was the constant theme of the adoration of the angels, if He was pleased to give up the glory of heaven and come down to this world, He would come down in some majestic way into some of the greatest cities with a splendid retinue, with some of the magnificence of building, with some of the magnificence of an earthly court. Not so. The little out-of-the-way village of Nazareth, in a despised part of the corner of the country, Galilee, there He was pleased to live, obedient: we know how it was, He went and was subject unto His parents; there He lived. And look at His patience. Living on there in His home life till He is thirty years of age, and only three and a half years more to live in this world! Surely it is an example to us, who in these days are apt to get impatient of stopping at home. It would have been apparently a wasting of opportunities, a wasting of life. Why, did He not come to save the world? and is He going to stop at home in the little village of Nazareth, and work in the carpenter's shop at home with His Mother for thirty years, and within three years and a half of His own death? Yes, because obedience and patience and the discharge of home duties are more precious really than mere energy and excitement, and all those natural kinds of expressions of the desire of winning our end with which we are apt to think we can only accomplish the work God gives us to do. Patience, obedience, discipline in home-life!

This wonderful word seems to me to belong to every man who knows anything of family life. Is it not what has gone on always? Is there not with all of us a feeling, 'Well, perhaps I had better stop at home, I had better give up this and give up that?' Many a man feels, 'I wish I could have more time for home, for my wife and children; no, but I must press on, I must do my work in life.' It may be the work, which some people are called to do, to go right away abroad, it may be to go like a missionary and to preach the gospel in a foreign land. And it seems that some people forget to have any feelings. Do not you care for your mother, father, brother, sister? And as it is in home life; so it is in public life: every man must give up much of his mere enjoyment. It is part of the burden of life, that every man has to balance as it were between the enjoyment and momentary comfort of his own home and family, and working out that work which God brought him into the world to do; working out the work which, if he does, he will be able to do more for the comfort of his family than if he gives way to the momentary demands of pleasure.

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I know that, in these days of rapid and hard work, there is a danger of men not giving enough time to their home. There is a danger that hard work will harden them, harden their feelings, harden their hearts too. It ought not to be so, it need not be so; and here in the blessed Son's example we have, I venture to think, a perfect example of the harmony of the first and the fifth commandments. The discord we, more or less, in little degrees, are conscious of. We do not know how much time to give to our family, how much time to spend on our work. Here is the perfect example. The Saviour is at home quietly all those early years, in all that obedience, all that simplicity, all that purity of love; then He is away on His life's work. Is His heart less tender? No. And on the Cross He turns thus to His Mother and says, 'There is provision. Woman, behold thy son; and, son, behold thy mother. Take care of her.' Let me ask you now every one just to kneel down and to think of this simple application of our Lord's work, and how far we are carrying out the fifth commandment and the first, doing our home duties and doing our Father's business.

My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

Only now, in the order of the words, does the Saviour come to speak of Himself—such absolute self-forgetfulness and unselfishness: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'; 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise'; and then to His Mother, 'Behold thy son,' and to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother.' And then only He comes to Himself. And, what a strange disappointment we shall say it is! When He does come to Himself, and speaks of Himself, I think we should have imagined that it would have been some wonderful outburst of praise and glory, and confident, triumphant faith expressed by it. Yet it is quite the reverse, quite the reverse: 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?' We should have thought that it would have been something like the chariots and horses of fire come down for Elijah, something that would have been a wonderful manifestation indeed. No; quite the contrary. He speaks of Himself as feeling forsaken.

Now, let us for a moment be clear as far as we can be as to what this does not mean. It cannot mean that there was any failure of trustfulness in God. God forbid. It cannot be that there was any feeling that the Father had left Him. The very words forbid it, where He says, 'My God, My God.' There is no separation between Himself and the Father—He is sure of that: 'My God, My God.' What can it mean, then? As far as we can tell, it must have been a wonderful instance of His love in allowing Himself to

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show us something of what the bitterness of sin will lead to, in the separation which it must bring between us and God. In this incommunicable anguish of the Sin-bearer, He felt Himself bearing the burden of the sins of the world, and He would have us see what a shadow, what a darkness, what an awfulness sin does produce: 'Why hast Thou forsaken Me?'—this darkness coming over Him because He had entered so closely into the position of the sinner. It may give us a warning of the awful despair that must come upon those who are actually separated from God. Then, again, it is a cry of pain, not of bodily pain, but of pain of the spirit, pain of heart. And it means this, that the Saviour was pleased to forego the comfort and the joy of the consciousness of the Father's presence for our sakes. Amongst the sufferings which He would undergo for us, one should be the foregoing of the comfort and of the joy of the brightness of the Beatific Vision. He would let that be veiled, and bear this cross for us.

This comes to a very practical truth which all, more or less, have to undergo, and that is the experience of the loneliness of goodness in this world. It is more or less a lonely thing. Many and many people suffer from it, and not a few break down under it. Any kind of greatness is necessarily singular and alone, for it only becomes greatness in so far as it exceeds that which is around it. And so it is in spiritual and moral life, in goodness just as it is in other things. And if a person is called, and answers to the call, to live a higher life, more out of the world, more unworldly, with a higher love, again and again he has to bear the loneliness and the solitude which belong to goodness in this life. Our Saviour had Himself said that all would forsake Him and fly, and so they did. People did not care about Him, they did not want Him; He was too good for them. His very presence seemed to be a trouble rather than a comfort; they wished to put Him away. He was a reproach to them. They put Him away at last, they put Him to death. But this was something more, this was a depth of loneliness which we never should have expected. He would, as it were, be bereft of the joy, of the consciousness of the presence of His Father: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

Turn to God in the agony of the moment of darkness and of doubt, hold on and wait, and the truth of the Sixty-second Psalm will come home to you: 'My soul truly waiteth still upon God. . . . God spake once, and twice also have I heard the same: that power belongeth unto God.' Ah! power, intellectual, spiritual, moral, as well as physical power; and He can make the mind which seems to be hopelessly perplexed, clear and restful. He can make the heart which seems to be as dry as a river-bed in summer, flow again like the streams of the autumn. He can give us, any moment that he pleases,

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of the refreshment from the fountain of His own omnipotence. He can easily refresh our minds, make the cloud pass, give us the light of His countenance, and we shall be in peace. 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Oh! not a few in these last days have felt the sympathy of this prayer; and out of my own little experience I am able to say, thanks be to God, that again and again this one and that one that had feared he was going to be a complete unbeliever, has only been feeling the strain which more or less must come upon our finite faculties if we turn them to the contemplation of the infinite, and after a while he has returned back again to a childlike trustfulness, a childlike simplicity, accepting, surrendering, and believing.

I thirst.

This short word has one of the simplest and most practical meanings, and yet I believe, as coming from our Lord's lips, it should be also, perhaps, one of the most far-reaching meanings of all. 'I thirst.' First of all it is to give us the assurance of the reality of our Lord's human nature, that He was very Man as well as very God, and that being very Man, and in the body He would bear the sufferings which come upon us through our bodily nature, He would bear in the body as well as in the mind, not only in the mind but in the body, so as to be a true and real sympathiser with all those who know what bodily suffering is, weakness of body, pain that comes from sickness, all the desponding weariness that comes with old age, when people cannot do what they used to do, and become dependent on other people. And it is very trying at the beginning of old age to be so constantly dependent upon other people when we have been accustomed to do things for ourselves. But it is a part of the discipline which belongs to our weak nature here to be helped by other people, and the Saviour has given us one very simple but very beautiful example of it. He bore His cross. Now, a mere natural heroic human nature would wish, if it did the thing at all, to do it for itself, to do it and to finish the thing without help at all, with heroic, Stoic-like fortitude take the cross, carry the cross, suffer on the cross, and not say a word about it. The Saviour is more perfect in His human nature. He takes the cross, He bears the cross; but He allows another even to help Him in the carrying of the cross, and Simon of Cyrene carries the cross part of the way to Calvary.

When we sometimes get impatient even with those who would help us, and save us trouble, and bear some suffering for us, when it rather touches our pride instead of bringing forth our gratitude, let us remember, if it humbles us a little bit to need the help of others,

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that the Saviour was pleased to accept the help of Simon of Cyrene in carrying His cross.

Now, the Saviour knew what it was to be hungry and to be thirsty. He has done much, and it has been a substantial comfort to thousands and thousands of poor people when they have been receiving the sympathetic assistance of their wealthy neighbours to know that in the Saviour they have some one who can understand them even better, because He was poor and homeless, had not where to lay His head, that He was hungry as a hungry man, and thirsty as a man that wants something to drink. It was a reality of sympathy which he would go through in order to be sure of understanding the feelings of those who would suffer. 'Blessed is the man that provideth for the sick and needy'—so runs one of our versions; but there is a better rendering: 'Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy,' that understands, that tries to enter into the feelings of the poor and the needy, of the hungry and the sick. Blessed is the man that considers—not merely gives his alms, but the man who considers, enters into, understands as far as he can—the poor, those who are in want, and the needy, whether it be through sickness or in any other way.

Now, the Saviour has given us this perfect example of understanding by His own experience what it is to be in want,—'I thirst.' It may perhaps at least make us careful and more tender, when we are talking about the suffering and the poor and the needy, it may make us more careful if we ask ourselves, Was I ever really hungry, really thirsty, not knowing whence to quench my thirst or stay my hunger? If not, am I sure that I can understand the feelings, the perplexity, the wounded self-respect which belongs to those people who in God's providence do not know whence to get their bread? 'I thirst,' the Saviour says. Let it make us tender and considerate if we would have for ourselves the blessing of the phrase, 'Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy.'

That very simple and practical exposition would be wrong if I were to leave it there. The Saviour meant more than that. When the Saviour was sitting in the middle of the day on the side of the well, talking with the woman of Samaria, then He said He was thirsty and asked her to give Him something to drink. But surely the very position in which He was sitting leads us to think—and His conversation with the woman—what He really was thirsting for was the soul of that poor creature, who was one of an alien, as it were, religion, broken in her social position, such a one as most people would have turned their back upon. She was a Samaritan, of an impure, as it were, faith; and she had had five husbands, and the man she was then living with was not her husband. The Saviour

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thirsted for her soul, to bring her to the knowledge of Himself, that she might be saved. And so the word of the Saviour, 'I thirst,' reaches further than the mere desire for the quenching of the natural thirst, and it means what is expressed in the psalm: 'My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?' There was a thirst for the souls of the people, a real desire to draw all men unto Himself. Now, we should ask ourselves, Have we that? have we that desire to bring people who may be socially and theologically, as we should say, repulsive to us, not in accord with us, but with whom we might naturally dispute, and from whom we might recoil? Have we that inner, spiritual thirst to bring all people round again so that they shall be in communion with God and in love one to another? When we move amongst the numbers of people in our big towns, when we see them pour out of a factory, do we have a longing towards them? O that I could help you to draw nearer to them, that I could see you more loving one with another! When we see them in our country villages working upon the land, do we long to lift up their hearts, and with all gentleness, yet with all power, constrain them to come nearer to God? Do we long, as it were, to get a greater consciousness of the spiritual life amongst us? Do we long to make the kingdom of God more of a reality amongst us? Do we long to see people making more of the Saviour and of Christianity, being children of God and members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven? Have we this thirst, this desire? Is it the thing we long for, so that it constantly comes up in our conversation, in our letters, in our intercourse with other people? Have we this great desire, do we thirst for it, to get rid of these unhappy divisions, to get away from all quarrel and dispute, to be of one mind, to love as brethren, to be like people going to their common home in heaven, children of one Father? Have we this burning brotherhood of love in us constantly? 'I thirst.'

The Saviour says, 'I thirst.' Take it spiritually. Blessed is the man that hungers after righteousness. Do you? If not, why not? Is it that you are like the man that is sick, and so you have no appetite, through some sin? is it that you are not working for God, or not growing in grace? Ask Him.

It is finished.

None but the Saviour, of all who ever wore human nature, could say that, at the end of life: 'It is finished.' All done, complete, nothing left undone that He ought to have done, nothing done which He ought not to have done, everything done that He had to do.

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Exactly at the right time, in the right place, in the right way, He did all things well. Oh, what a contrast with our lives! Oh, what a contrast with our lives! Any of you who are getting to the ridge of life, and getting towards the end, as you look back, can you say, 'It is finished,' everything complete? No, no; nothing complete. But with the Saviour everything was done completely: the home life at Nazareth absolutely perfectly done, no collision between the first and the fifth commandments, His Father's business done utterly, His Mother's love retained completely, everything in every direction absolutely complete. More than that, oh, more than that! 'It is finished' must have meant far more than we can understand at all. Up to this point God had been leading the world ever since man fell after his creation—up to this God had been leading the world. In the fulness of time, the Son of God came forth and was born. Now He had died and offered up the full, perfect, and complete sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Whatever there was in the bond of sin by which man was held, that bond is cancelled by the death of Christ upon the Cross. Whatever there was of debt, that debt is paid; the debt is paid and the bond is broken; the snare is broken, we are delivered, and man is free. Free! The devil has tried his utmost, he has thought to wound the Lamb of God: in all his fury he came upon Him, but his jaw was broken, for there was the Rock of Ages there as well as the Lamb of God, very God as well as very Man, and he had to return; he returned and failed, and he was broken,—death and the devil vanquished, vanquished. 'It is finished.' Whatever there was of bondage, of debt, whatever there was of disease in man, now the perfect cure is provided—the Rock of Ages; there from the riven side shall flow the double stream of pardon which shall wash and cleanse me and make me pure. From the foot of the tree of the forbidden fruit flowed a polluted stream of sin and misery and death. Now from the tree of the Cross there shall flow the streams with the correlative remedies, righteousness, happiness, and life eternal. 'It is finished.' The world is redeemed. Man can come back again to God. God can take His child back again into His arms. God can say to the prodigal, 'Come back again'; and He can go out to meet him, fall upon his neck, get ready the fatted calf and slay it, put the shoes on his feet, and the ring on his hand. Yes, the prodigal may come in now. 'It is finished,' man is redeemed.

That is why we call it Good Friday. That is why it is worth while coming here to-day, Good Friday. The Saviour offered up to-day the 'one full and perfect sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world,' and therefore for mine. And we to-day in all humility can look up, if we accept it as our own. There is the

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precious blood, there the precious blood of the Lamb; a red line drawn across the debt of my sins cancels the bond. And all the hope we have as Christians, all the power we have through the sacraments of the Church, all this takes its origin, as it were, from the fountain that is opened now to-day on Calvary. 'It is finished,' because the bond of sin is broken, the debt of sin is paid, the disease of sin is remedied. 'It is finished.' The Saviour is to be buried, to rise, to ascend, to send forth the Holy Spirit, to give the means of grace. All this He knows now. This is all secure. 'It is finished,' the world is redeemed, mankind is saved. He sees it all. 'It is finished'; all that was leading up to it in the heathen world and in the Jewish world, all of it culminates, and is finished.

Indeed, it is a marvellous thing; and yet contrast for a minute the outward appearance, just as it looked. What a collapse it must have seemed: just simply three malefactors upon the cross, as they seemed to be; just, as it were, the world triumphing, and there you have the King of the Jews—there He has got what He deserves! Nobody cares for Him. What a foolish end! Of course He has come to nothing, killed like the rest, crucified. And so the crowd went home. Ah! to look at it on the outward side, it looked like a dead failure. The Saviour saw the victory and said, 'It is finished.' Perhaps, sometimes when we read of, or know by our own experience, the loss of some one whom we think we can very ill spare, or whom the age and the Church can ill spare, we think when such a one is taken away, What will become of us? It seems to be a breakdown, it seems to be a failure; and we talk of this man and this woman as seeming to have failed in their lives, and died before their time. Let us sometimes hesitate before we say that. We only see a very little bit of things. God sees it all; and what seems to be a failure on our part, as far as we can see it, may be complete as far as God's purpose is concerned, and the man has done the work that God brought him into the world to do. It is far, far too mysterious a mechanism for us roughly to put our hands into, the mechanism by which God carries on the work of the world. God brings a man or a woman into the world just to make a little contribution, as it were, to life. They do their part, and then they leave. But again and again we cry out, and we say, Oh, what a failure he was! No; he may have done all that he had to do. And when we sometimes see in the life of the Church a life which seems to be a failure, and it seems to come to nothing, do we not say, Ah, now that man is dead we shall never get on! So it seemed on the evening of the first Good Friday; but the Saviour said, 'It is finished.' And even in our own poor lives, when we see how much of confusion and incompleteness there is, and how little we have done that can be said to be finished, how

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we put our hands to this and put our hands to that, and it is all imperfect—let us trust that we have just done what we have tried to do in obedience to the Saviour and in union with the Saviour. When He takes us away, that will do. ‘It is finished’; you have done what I would have you do; that will do. It may look like a collapse, but it is a victory, and you shall be crowned in the end.

Let me then, before I finish this word, suggest to you what I venture to call the law of handing on. It is a mysterious law. We often, as we are getting towards the end of life, do not know what we have got to do; we cannot tell. We may have something to do for somebody, most important: to hand on some teaching, some example to our children, to our own country, to help to send a mission into another land. We have just got to do something before we die. We do not know. It is like as it was with Elijah. Elijah thought that his life had come to an end, and that he was good for nothing, and he begged to die. But Jehovah reproved him, and said that he was not to die yet, that he had work to do. He was to go and anoint Hazael king of Syria, and Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha as his successor as prophet. Now observe: the great Elijah had nothing more to do himself, but what he had to do was to commission others. He had to hand on the work of the Lord to others who should work when he was gone. Just the same with David: in the end of David’s life we see him gathering his court together, and he calls them round him, and he calls Solomon his son, and tells him to be of good courage, and he hands to him the pattern of the Temple, which he said the Lord had given to him. David was not to build the Temple, David never saw the Temple built. David said he had prepared with all his heart for the house of his God. He had done what he could, but he was not to build the Temple; Solomon was to do that, but David was to hand on the pattern by which his son was to build. Think for yourselves what you may yet have to do, so that that word in its degree may be yours.

Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.

The first word the Saviour uttered began with ‘Father’: ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’ The last word began, again, with ‘Father’: ‘Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.’ Communion with God, unbroken of course, all through the life, and then to go up into the life and the joy of the glory which He used to have before the world was made! For one moment only you may arrest your attention on this fact, that the Saviour here

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uses again one of the words of Scripture—the Thirty-first Psalm and the sixth verse: ‘Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.’ And certainly two of the other words out of the seven were also from the Scripture: ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ and ‘I thirst!’ Then even at such a supreme moment, at the last agony on the Cross, when He was to speak the Seven Words, three at least—possibly ‘It is finished’ is from the Twenty-second Psalm—but three are words of Scripture. Take it home with you. Let your Bible be your constant companion in order to keep you in communion with God. The Psalter seems to be, as we may say, the Saviour’s very book of devotion. Let it be one result from our Good Friday, standing near the Cross, to make more use of our Bible. And let me from this point out how the Saviour has used it,—if I may say so, how He makes it especially His own. He adds the word ‘Father’ to this text: ‘Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.’ He added the word ‘Father.’ It is not in the Psalm; and so He would teach us, I believe, to use the Scripture, taking the words of Scripture and bringing them home to ourselves, so that they should express our language towards God and God’s message towards us.

‘Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.’ Oh, what perfect peace, and what final courage! He has gently and quietly borne all up to the last moment, and then, without the least excitement, simply says, ‘Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.’

Let us go back, then, to-day, after tarrying round the Cross this short time, in ourselves, above all things thankful that thus there is pardon for my sins, that the Saviour has died for me. If He died for me and showed such love to me, I ought to forgive other people, I ought to be kind to other people, to forgive them, as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven me; and I ought to look up to Him and give myself to Him now, henceforth, and for ever.

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